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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PERCEPTIONS OF TRUSTEES ON THE ROLE OF SCHOOLING

by

© Noel Paul Gour

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
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....The Role of Schooling - A Trustee Perspective....

submitted by ......Noel Paul Gour....................

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration.

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Date. January 26..1983

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate trustees' perceptions of the role of schooling. School trustees are not all elected directly by the local electorate. For example, the trustee-councillor is elected first as a municipal councillor and by virtue of being a councillor, he/she usually assumed the functions of a school trustee. The trustee-councillor may, therefore, have differing perceptions on the role of schooling because he/she may be primarily concerned with the administration of the municipality.

This study addressed itself to two broad issues. These issues were as follows:

1) What were the trustee perceptions of the role of schooling?
2) Did trustees, by virtue of the method by which they were elected or appointed, have differing perceptions on the role of schooling?

The data were collected using a 114 item questionnaire. The data were analysed with the assistance of the SPSS and the DERS computer programs. The results which are reported in this study were based on a 70 percent return of the sampled trustee-chairmen and trustee-reeves of Alberta. To the extent that trustee perceptions could be measured, the major findings were as follows:

1) According to the profile of the chairmen and the reeves, Alberta has very experienced leadership at the school board level. The majority of the trustees in

the study have been trustees for a least two full terms. Their perceptions of the role of schooling were based on experience and exposure to the many demands of providing education to the students.

2) Budgets seemed to be very critical to the trustees. An overwhelming number of trustees stated that the discussion of budgets was of paramount importance.

3) Trustees judged the schools to be handling the testing of any form of learning disability most effectively as compared to the handling of the counselling services, which was judged to be one of the least effectively handled items.

4) The mainstreaming of the handicapped or the disadvantaged child caused concern among the trustees. A large majority of trustees felt that they were not able to meet all the needs of all the students. Furthermore, a large majority of trustees favoured the boards having the right to control student admission into the schools under their direction because of lack of facilities and/or programs.

5) The property tax was still favoured as one of the methods to pay for educational costs. There were, however, significant differences of opinion betweeen the trustees and the trustee-councillors on this item.

6) There were significant differences of opinion between the trustees and the trustee-councillors on such items as 1) budgets, 2) mainstreaming, 3) student discipline, 4) religious participation, and 5) enrichment programs.

7) There were strong similar perceptions on the role of schooling on such items as 1) attendance and admission, 2) teacher contracts and teacher termination, 3) teacher performance guidelines, 4) school-student-staff morale, 5) needs of the students, and 6) the role of the principal as supervisor of instruction.

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Introductory Statement

Trustees, elected by the local electorate or appointed by the Department of Education, are mandated, as a Board, to manage the affairs of schools. Whether elected or appointed, the Board also acts as, "administrative agent for effective provincial control of education" (Bryne, 1957: 31). The Board has, therefore, a dual role to play. It manages the most expensive unit of local government (Eliot, 1959) as the legally elected or appointed representative of the people and is the implementor of provincial statutes, directives, and guidelines as the agent of the Crown. Under section 72 of the School Act 1970, the Board's function is defined as both the representative of the people at the local level, and as the agent who must implement provincial direction as defined by the Department of Education. The decisions the Board makes, therefore, constitute part of the legal operations framework that affects education (Bargen, 1960). The Board should, therefore, play a vital role in directing educational policy in Alberta. Does the method by which the trustee assumes office affect his/her abilities to assume the mandatory and discretionary powers that are outlined in the Alberta School Act 1970?

The individual becomes a trustee by means of one of the following processes:

1) Election by public vote as trustee of a district or division and whose legal responsibility is governed by the School Act 1970. The election is governed by The School Election Act 1970.

2) Election by public vote as councillor under the County Act 1970 and can become, by virtue of being a councillor, a school trustee. The election is governed by the provisions of the Municipal Election Act; "in so far as they are applicable" (County Act 1970, section 10).

3) Appointment by the Minister or the Department of Education to administer a jurisdiction.

Do trustees, by virtue of the method by which they are selected, have different commitments to education?

The trustee who has actively campaigned for election to the school board has done so on the basis of his/her philosophy regarding the educational process. The county councillor may be primarily concerned with the administration of the municipality in a much broader context and may have less well defined opinions regarding education. The appointed trustee, whilst representing the Department of Education, may also implement his/her own philosophy and objectives of education.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to delineate the perceptions that trustees have regarding the role of schooling. The study attempts to determine if there are differences in perceptions among the three types of trustees.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary function of a school board is to recognize, to consider, to debate, and finally to decide what the issues are and to establish policies (Bargen, 1960). This study addresses itself to two broad issues . These issues are as follows:

1) What do trustees perceive to be the role of schooling?

2) Do trustees, by virtue of the method by which they are elected or appointed, have differing perceptions of the role of schooling.

Sub-problems

Trustee perceptions on the role of schooling is a very broad issue. This study, therefore, attempts to determine;

1) How often do trustees discuss such issues as the role of the principal, the role of the teacher, the role of the school, and the role of the student and how often do they make judgements on how the school handles such issues?

2) How do trustees react to the mandatory obligations and the discretionary powers outlined in the Alberta School Act 1970 on such issues as: a) pupil admittance and suspension, b) financing of education and such issues as alternate or private schools, c) teacher contracts and such issues as designation of position or terminations, and d) pupil transportation issues?

3) What are their views on para-educational issues such as moral and social issues.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is at present limited research on the trustee in Canada and especially in Alberta. The trustee, in Alberta, is an elected official in all but ministerial exceptions and federally operated districts such as the armed forces bases.

The trustee has, therefore, a political base of operation.

It is of significance that the trustee, as a member of a Board, in Alberta also acts as an agent of the crown. Part of the Board's function is to implement provincial statutes, directives, and guidelines. The Board has, therefore, an avenue of influence to the provincial government that is sanctioned in law by the Alberta School Act 1970, and the Alberta School Trustees' Association Act 1970.

This study outlines the many variables which may affect trustee perception on education. The study examines the factors which may influence their personal definition of the role of schooling. These factors may have a critical influence upon the way a trustee applies his/her mandate in determining how the affairs of the schools are conducted. The significance of their decisions on the students may ultimately be of prime consideration.

According to Cistone:

> The function of the trustee should be to interpret the will of the people about their society to those who must organize formal learning in that society. Too often one finds that it is the non-elected experts who carry this out...(1972, p.9)

This study may be of interest to the trustees, parents, administrative personnel, the Alberta School Trustees' Association and the Alberta Teachers' Association. Consequently the beliefs trustees hold, and their perceptions of the role of schooling can assist in the setting of policies for the efficient running of the schools.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions are basic to this study:

1) Alberta Trustees are politically a heterogeneous group. A random or selective random sampling of the group would be representative of the views of the trustees.

2) The Chairmen of the School Boards represent the collective voice of the trustees of their jurisdictions.

3) The Reeves of the Counties represent the collective voice of the County councillors.

4) There is a multiplicity of perceptions when attempting to define the role of schooling.

5) Trustees perceive their role to be that of guardians of the school systems of Alberta.

6) By virtue of being apppointed or elected to manage the affairs of a school system, trustees have internalized their perceptions of the role of schooling.

7) The position of trustee is perceived by some trustees from a political rather than an educational perspective.

LIMITATIONS

The major limitation of the study is inherent in the utilization of a questionnaire as the major data collection instrument. The questionnaire utilizes the Thurston Scale format which forces the subject to endorse or reject the statement. There is, therefore, the possibility of misinterpretation of the statement or the possibility that the trustee may not be satisfied with an agree-disagree answer.

The representativeness of the responses is limited to the percentage of trustees who respond to the questionnaire. Follow-up procedures are incorporated in the study in an attempt to promote maximum response.

The study is further limited by the fact that the questionnaire does not include any pre-set agreement on terminology.

DELIMITATIONS

For purposes of this study, only the chairmen of public and separate school boards and the reeves of each county are surveyed.

The study is further delimited to surveying a selection of public and separate school trustees whose jurisdictions educate students from E.C.S. to grade twelve and who operate under the umbrella of the Alberta School Trustees' Association Act. Trustees of private schools, colleges, or other institutions are not included in the questionnaire survey.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

School Systems:

School system is used generically in this study to define the legally designated educational centres ranging from Early Childhood Schooling to grade twelve, in any given location.

School Boards:

The legally designated governing bodies established by the School Act 1970 (as amended from time to time) to manage the affairs of school systems. The terms board, school board, school committee, board of education are synonomous for purposes of this thesis.

Trustee:

The term trustee in this study refers to an elected or appointed member of the Board of Education or School Board whose responsibilities are outlined in the School Act 1970.

Role of Schooling:

The term is used to define the process, in educational terms, in which the learner has the opportunity to become a well informed, well educated, well rounded person.

Role of the School:

The term in this study relates to the provision of an environment conducive to the learning process.

Goal:

The term 'goal' describes the commitment to providing schooling that is as effective as possible for as many students as possible.

Accountability:

Accountability is defined in political terms only. It refers to such phrases as; to answer to, to account for decisions, to be re-elected based on ...etc.

Perception:

For purposes of this study, the term refers to the art of being able to delineate issues that have educational and philosophical overtones. Such words as beliefs, ideals, feelings, etc. are used synonomously with perception.

Public or Separate:

The terms public and separate refer to school boards whose prime function is providing an education to students based on no religious affiliation for the public and on a religious (Protestant or Roman Catholic) affiliation for the separate.

Zone of Acceptance:

The following statement of Hoy and Miskel (1978:229) best describes this term. They stated that:

> ...if subordinates have a personal stake (high relevance) in the decision and have the knowledge to make a useful contribution (high expertise), then the decision clearly falls outside the zone of acceptance, and subordinates should be involved in the decision-making process.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Chapters I, II, and III establish the problem researched and analysed for reporting, the related literature for background information, and the analysis procedures to be used in reporting the findings of the study.

In chapter IV, the experience of the trustees (chairmen and reeves) are reported. Chapters V, VI, VII, and VIII report the findings and discuss the analysis of the data. More specifically, chapter V reports the findings to the questionnaire question, "How often do you discuss the following at the board meetings?" In chapter VI the trustee response of how well the schools are handling certain issues is reported and analysed. Chapter VII reports the findings of trustee opinions on specific items of the School Act. The perceptions of the trustees on selected educational items is reported in chapter VIII. In chapter IX significant similarities and differences between the elected trustee and the elected trustee-councillor are reported. In the final chapter, a summary of the findings, the conclusions of the analysis and the implications derived from the summary and conclusions are reported.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

This chapter focuses on reviewing literature and research on the school board, the trustee, the chairman, and the trustees' perceptions, beliefs, opinions and attitudes towards the major task of the trustee: policy-making.

The following statement of Bargen (1972), made at the symposium sponsored by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, reflects the importance of the school board trustee as the one entrusted with ensuring the quality and quantity of this process of education.

> It is through the process of education more than through any other process in society that you build not only skills but attitudes, mental habits, dispositions, outlooks, philosophies, morals, character, and all those things that become such an intergral part of the total 'Weltanschauung' of a person (1972:76).

Jongeward, (1975) stated that there is a paucity of literature and research on rural school boards as compared to the urban school boards. Coleman (1973) also concurred that little has been written on the trustee, as compared to the superintendent or the principal. Beaudry (1978) in his research of the Alberta School Trustee expanded the literature and research on trustees.

This review of the literature and research, therefore, further complements Beaudry's thesis research, and attempts to focus on Canadian sources and then complements these sources with those from the United States.

THE SCHOOL BOARD

School Boards are the legally designated local governing bodies established by the provincial legislatures. Provinces vary, however, in their approach to local education control. For example, Bergen (1976:45) in describing the Canadian-provincial education scene. He stated that:

> There is no guarantee against the possibility of greater centralization of control in any or all aspects of education. In some Canadian provinces this has already occurred. What might happen is entirely subject to the whims of the provincial law-making authority, the Legislature, and may depend on the general political climate. Only the constitution, as provided in the Alberta Act of 1905, limits the powers of the legislature. The historical and sociological context would support a forecast that locally elected school authorities, in one form or another, will remain on the Alberta scene for many years to come.

Brown (1968) further stated that local control of schools or boards was generally well established when colonial and later provincial governments began to become involved. He suggested that because local school governance existed prior to the existence of the provincial authorities, there is a widespread myth that, for example, regional governments -an intermediate level of government established in Ontario- cannot tamper with the local government structures in education unless the local governments clearly indicate by petition, referendum, or by by popular movement that a change is desired. Brown (1968) also cited the Alberta County system as another example of the myth that local government structures in education cannot be tampered with without local favour. As explained by Byrne (1968), the Alberta county system is an all purpose type of local government unit which has the authority to administer both the municipal and educational affairs of the local government. The board of education of the county council and the elected trustees of the towns who are within the County for purposes of education administer the schools under the authority of the School Act 1970. This all purpose type of local government unit (Brown, 1968) could be formed only at the request of one or both local government bodies, and that the county method of local government could be disestablished as a result of the mandatory referendum after five years in operation. As a further explanation, Brown stated that the mandatory referendum in the original County Act was changed to "petition the county council to conduct a vote on the question whether or not..." (County Act 1970, section 5). According to Brown (1968) the government changed the referendum process because it became clear after some mandatory referendums that the people wished to keep the county system.

Today some 43 percent of the rural Alberta units are organized under the county system. The Alberta County system is, therefore, an excellent example of the myth that the form of local government cannot be changed by the provincial or other legally provincially approved regional or local governing structure. The established local format can be altered by the legislatures of the provinces. The province has, in law, the sole responsibility, according to section 93 of the British North America Act, to legislate and administer all education within their province. The province can in fact change the local structures in education and alter the control school boards have over education (Brown, 1968).

Byrne (1968) concurred with Brown (1968), however Byrne described the authority of the provincial legislature over education as the guardian of education. According to Byrne the authority of the school board rested with the provincial legislature. The school boards are, therefore, creatures of provincial legislation and an agency of the province for the local administration of schools. He further stated that the limits of boards as well as the Department of Education and the Minister of Education are defined by the Acts. As examples of the statements of Byrne, the Alberta School Act 1970 specifies that the Board of Education operates as a corporation. The Department of Education Act 1970 specifies the powers of the Minister of Education and by that token, the limitation of the trustee's power. The Alberta School Trustees' Association Act (1970) specifies the collective rights of the trustees as a provincial group. Byrne explained that the legislation that empowers the board to administer the school system, also clearly specifies that this authority cannot be interfered with by the Minister of Education or the department itself. It follows, according to Byrne, that the authority of the board is created by the Legislature of the Province and cannot be altered at the whims of the department or its minister without proper legislative action. The Legislature, however, could in law decide to operate the schools directly. This action by the Legislature could not be appealed.

The legitimacy of provincial control over education seemed to be stressed by Byrne and Brown. They emphasized the authority of the provinces over education under section 93 of the British North America Act (Canada Act, 1980). The school boards were, therefore, the creatures of provincial legislatures. As creatures of the provincial legislature, according to Enns (1963), the school boards were entrusted with a legal function of governance.

Enns (1963:37) stated that a school board is a "quasi-municipal corporation". This corporation has only one governmental function: namely that of education. The school board has only powers granted by the legislature of that province. Lamb (1966) also dealt with the legal basis of education.

Bargen (1977) concurred with Byrne. Unlike Enns (1963) and Lamb (1966), Bargen dealt mainly with the political and not with the legal basis of Canadian education. For example, Bargen (1977) stated that school boards could be legislated out of existence. He, however, further pointed out that this kind of action by the province would be a very unwise political move of the province. In its broad perspective, according to Bargen education is a national concern, a provincial function, and a local responsibility (1977:6).

As advisor to the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, Coleman (1973) also viewed the school board and, therefore, the trustee, in political terms. He made the following comment about the school board:

> One of the most interesting aspects of education in Canada, and one in which Canada and the United States differ markedly from the rest of the world, is the control of education by locally elected (or appointed) boards of school trustees (1973:407).

Coleman further stated that the local trustee, as a member of the school board, is part of the most vital political arm in the administration of education in Canada. However, as a member of that school board, the trustee is the least studied component of the political system. The trustee is entrusted with ensuring that the wishes of the community are part of the discussions dealing with public education.

Iannaccone (1972), unlike Coleman, stressed the legal and political aspects of provincial (or state) prerogatives in education. He suggested that we have to talk about dual sovereignty when discussing education. The provincial claim to sovereignty rests on the legal and constitutional reality, while the local claim to sovereignty rests upon the conviction of the people that this is a local matter. In 1970 Iannaccone, in collaboration with Lutz, described the workings of school districts as a

> ...webwork of semi-formal social organizations providing the machinery for mediating the differences among interests seeking to influence school district policy (1970:19).

Hodgson (1976:32) re-emphasized Iannaccone's writings in more forceful words. He stated that:

> There is massive evidence from the Canadian provinces to show that unresolved conflicts at the local level are likely to end up in the central departments and agencies of provincial governments...,Canadians know very well that the levers of power are situated in provincial capitals; if an issue is serious enough, then one goes to the people who have their hands on the levers.

According to Hodgson (1976), the authority rests at the provincial level only after the issue at the local education level has not been satisfactorily solved. It, therefore, follows that local control is only strong as when the local board exercises prudentally and judiciously its authority.

THE TRUSTEE

To Bendiner (1969:3), the trustee as a member of the school board:

> ...has homier and less precise functions, not usually to be found in civics textbooks at all: it <the trustee> is local philosopher, it is watchdog, and it is whipping boy.

According to Fisher, (1972) the time has come to consider abolishing the position of the school board trustee. The Department of Education is the legally responsible arm of the provincial government that should control directly the schools of the province. In the larger units of Ontario, the trustee's political legitimacy has been weakened. The trustee is, therefore, placed "into a more fence sitting position...."(1972:41). Fisher, however, suggested that this ineffectiveness may be altered by a differentiated county board role. The county would handle the budget and the local boards administer its district within the county. Even though Fisher (1972) suggested alternatives to the present day dilemma, other literature suggested that school boards be emasculated and terminated or be given a new life. Strembitsky (1977) in his article concurred with such strong language. He stated that the authority of the school trustees of Alberta is being systematically eroded. He, therefore, argued that the province terminate the operations of school boards or give them new life. Not all literature agreed with this interpretation on the usefullness of school boards. For example, Coleman (1973) observed that the trustee problem is mainly a problem of effectiveness.

Coleman (1973) observed, however, that the problem of effectiveness is not necessarily that trustees are ineffective as much as that trustees are having more highly trained experts administer the school systems, whilst they, the trustees, are quite untrained. Bargen (1980) argued, for example, that school boards are democracies in action. Trustees have weakenesses, but they are part of the best mechanism that presently exists. He agreed with Moffit that:

> No satisfactory explanation of a board of education has ever been written. In general, it may be said that a school board is usually composed of a group of tough-minded citizens afflicted with curiosity, insomnia, sensitivity, love for fellow men, and a deep desire to serve same - or else how could they take the punishment dished out to them? (Moffit, 1959:8)

The weakness may not be in the institution, but instead, in the person who runs for this political office.

According to Cistone (1976), school board members are recruited from a narrow socio-economic range. They perpetuate themselves by running for that office until such time as they have someone of their choice to replace them and they also instigate the candidacy of others. Counts (1927), in his classic research in the United States, as reported by Goldhammer (1964), along with Beaudry (1978), Proudfoot (1962) and Mann (1975) agreed with Cistone that school boards members are recruited from a narrow socio-economic range and that there is an understood status quo in the control of school boards. Iannaccone and Lutz (1970) stated, however, that there is enough social diversity among the trustees, enough electoral conflict and community responsiveness to indicate that the vast majority of school board trustees are not the passive captives of any group. They further suggested that community power is focused on issues or policy areas and that trustees who understand the Zone of Acceptance of the community perform their role, whether from any one specific socio-economic group or not. Assuming that Cistone (1976) and Iannaccone (1970) are both correct in their analysis of the trustee, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees has a decisive role to play.

THE CHAIRMAN

The chairman heads "a governmental body with de facto sovereignty, by law, over the school system" (Iannaccone, 1970:1). Bargen (1970) suggested that the board is represented by its chairman. Bargen (1970:11) further stated that "the chief strength of the chairman and the other members of the board lies in their capacity to provide breadth of viewpoint". Bryce (1980) stated that the chairman represented the wishes of the board and Curran (1978:6) suggested that he personified the board because he/she "subordinates his views to those of the board corporate". According to Anderson (1978), the acts of the trustees are acts of the corporation. The chairman is, therefore, head of this corporate body. Proudfoot (1962) noted that during the interviews of the board as part of his research, the influence of the chairman of the board was very evident. For example, he noted the distrust one chairman had of his interview of the board. That chairman felt that the interview was part of an Alberta Teachers' Association "plot" to gain extra information on the school board. As a consequence, Proudfoot (1962) was not able to receive personal information on the trustees nor perceptions they held about the operations of a public school system. Andrews (1970) agreed with Proudfoot, however, he emphasized that the chairman is not only very influential over the other trustees, but in fact, the chairman in law presides over all meetings, signs the minutes of meetings, may vote on resolutions, and as presiding officer, the chairman may expel or exclude any trustee guilty of improper conduct. Andrews (1970:20) further stated that the chairman plays an important public relations role with the public, as well as with the staff of the system and in practice, the chairman protects the superintendent and staff from "frivolous" board activities. Bargen (1970) succinctly summarized the chairman's role by describing it as the key to an effective board. Bargen (1970:10) described the chairman as "strong and enlightened...". He further stated:

> To get individuals to act together in an effective way requires strong and enlightened leadership. This leadership must come from the chairman. His understanding, his skill as convenor, his approach to people are all keys to achieving this....

Bargen further suggested that:

> It is the chairman who will either form his board members into a team, accepting the discipline of procedures, or allow the board members to run rampant, without effective procedural guidance (1970:11).

The effectiveness of the chairman, according to Fisher (1972), Coleman (1973), Bargen (1980), Moffit (1959), Bargen (1970), Bryce (1980), and Proudfoot (1962), is the key to a successfully operated school board. Of paramount importance, however, to the school board's effectiveness is the individual trustee's perception of his/her function.

TRUSTEE PERCEPTION ON POLICYMAKING

Usdan (1975:275) suggested that trustee effectiveness is not only dependent on the leadership qualities of the chairman, but on trustee recognition of his/her role or function. He stated that:

> Local boards of education are now dependent upon an array of external social, economic, and political influences. Their decisions must be predicated upon consideration of a host of factors

> over which they have little or no control. Thus, it behooves local boards, if they are to remain viable in the increasingly politicized educational environment in which they exist, to broaden and deepen their base of lay support through the creation of new linkages and mechanisms which expand and facilitate meaningful citizen participation in the shaping of educational policy.

Coleman (1973) suggested that trustees do not seem to be willing to accept the responsibility of being policymakers because they do not perceive the task of policymaking as a primary function of the trustee. Coleman further stated that:

> The appropriate role of trustees in the development of policies is essentially the obverse of the Superintendent's role. The trustees must specify the values to be maximized, that is the purposes of the policies (1973:420).

Possibly the purposes of the policies are difficult to express. In 1976, Wilson suggested the following as the reasons why trustees are now renewing their interests in policies. The following statements are a summary from his article, School Board Policies: What are they? How to write them. Wilson (1976) stated that there is:

> 1) an increasing difficulty of maintaining the separation between the policymaking and the executive functions in school management;
>
> 2) an increase in size of school systems;
>
> 3) an increased internal pressure on the board and the superintendent;
>
> 4) an increased external pressure on the board of education by assorted special interest groups;
>
> 5) a changing demand on education in order to correct society's shortcomings;

6) a concern for accountability; and

7) a concern for the evaluation of the superintendent (the American Superintendent seems to be in a precarious state according to Wilson).

All of these concerns being placed on the trustee are forcing them to express their beliefs or purposes in clear statements. Having stated why he believed trustees are showing renewed interest in policymaking, he then proceeded to identify issues that are not policies. Wilson (1976:13-18) stated that policy is not:

1) a course of action

2) a regulation or procedure

3) a state (provincial) law (statute)

4) necessarily board decisions

5) a job description(e.g. superintendent)

Tymko (1976) agreed with Wilson's (1976) identification of what are not policy issues. Dror (1968) in his book Public Policymaking Reexamined also examined the task of policymaking. He defined and outlined what he felt were the twelve main characteristics of this term 'policymaking' (1968:12-17). Policymaking for Bargen (1976) is the most essential function for trustees. He felt in fact, that trustees must be the final policy makers in education. However, in order for policymaking to be the essential function of trustees, it is also essential that this function be based on some specific perceptions, beliefs, opinions on the role of schooling in society.

In 1966, the Cubberly Conference, sponsored by Stanford University, examined some of the stresses that the trustee was facing. James (1966) the director of the conference, stated the following in his opening address:

> ... However, the problem that now face school boards are unprecedented in their importance and impatience. Community groups pressure boards for social and educational reform while local politics and state and national agencies limit their power to act. School administrators and teacher groups are assuming more and more of the decisionmaking that was formerly the board's prerogative. Yet the need for a vigorous and informed lay leadership in education is stronger than ever. Can school boards adjust to this era of conflict without relinquishing the tradition of local control of education?

Even earlier than the Cubberly Conference, Stapley (1957) reported the research of a fifty-four item questionnaire on Opinions of School Board Member. On the basis of a fifty-three percent response, Stapley (1957) reported the following trustee and superintendent opinions. Only those that seem to be pertinent to the Alberta scene are summarized. They are as follows:

1) Trustees should be chosen on the basis of their willingness to give freely of their time, especially outside of their community.

2) Trustees represent the will of the people, but attempt to mold public opinion in favour of good schools.

3) The superintendent should be the authority who recommends personnel to the position to be filled and the board should be the authority that accepts or rejects the recommendation.

4) The superintendent directs employee activities and the board speaks through the superintendent.

5) Local leadership should be blamed for not meeting the needs of the youth.

> 6) Standing committees of the board are undesirable.
>
> 7) The primary aim of the board ought to be the development of good citizens.
>
> 8) It is the responsibility of the state to create administrative units of satisfactory size.
>
> 9) Controversial subjects should not be on the curriculum.
>
> 10)The tenure laws create more problems than it solves and is generally undesirable in the State of Indiana. (however, the superintendents had divergent views on this item)

Minar (1966:16) succinctly summarized trustee opinion when he stated:

> ...the limits on school system responsibility leads to frustration and for inaction. School boards are under pressure from the social conditions that exist in their communities, but they do not have the power to deal with them (e.g. housing, zoning, health services,etc.).

Goldhammer's (1964:107) statement that:

> it is necessary for the board to maintain proper definitions of the shared responsibilities which exist between the citizen board and the professional staff.

is the underlying function that a board must continually strive for. In striving to fulfil this function, the trustee, according to Christenson, (1977:18) must constantly be aware that:

> While schools can't substitute for good homes, they can help reinforce sound parental teaching and present the case for tested moral values ....

SUMMARY

There is an unfortunate paucity of literature and research relating to the trustee. Many studies deal incidently with the trustee, but it is comparatively rare to find research in which the primary thrust relates to the trustee's perception of the role of schooling.

Some literature indicated that the trustee is primarily a creature of provincial legislation. In other literature the terms 'corporation and corporate body' have been used to describe school boards and trustees.

According to some authorities, the locally elected school authorities will continue as the viable alternative to centralized provincial control. Some authorities, however, continue to question the viability of the present school boards. To these authorities, there is a need to revitalize or terminate the present structure of school boards.

Much of the literature referred to the Count (1927) research which indicated that trustee recruitment comes from a narrow socio-economic grouping and that the effectiveness in representing the wishes of the local electorate is questionable. The narrow-socioeconomic grouping, according to other literature, does not weaken the effectiveness of the trustees. On the contrary, it is suggested that there is enough diversity amongs the trustees and that they are not passive captives of any group.

Much of the literature acknowledged that the chairman played a primary role in the effective running of school board.

It is evident from this summary that divergent views have been expressed over the years.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter focuses on the research design and the methodology employed in the study. This chapter also presents a limited demographic breakdown of trustee response to the survey and the statistical tests used to analyse the survey data.

THE INSTRUMENT

An eight page survey questionnaire was used in the study. The questionnaire was divided into three parts.

1) Part 1 was concerned with the frequency of board discussions of specific topics and how well they judged the schools were handling these areas.

2) Part 2 dealt with trustee evaluation of the Alberta School Act. The trustees were asked to give their opinions on four broad areas that were covered in the Act: a) pupil admittance and suspension, b) financing, c) staffing, and d) transportation. The intent of this section was to establish whether or not the trustees' perceptions of the role of schooling was based on externally imposed restrictions.

3) Part 3 asked for trustee perceptions, opinions or beliefs on educational topics. The intent of this

section was to allow the trustee the opportunity to reflect on what he/she perceived to be the role of schooling.

The questionnaire was used because it represented the only method that was feasible to survey the views of a small select population over a large geographic area. A sampling of the school district chairmen, all school division chairmen, and in the case of counties, the chairman of the board as well as the reeve, were asked to respond to the survey. The survey was sent directly to the residence of the chairman. The reeves' survey questionnaire was, however, sent to the County office. The method used was judged to be the best method for a high percentage of return.

Prior to the distribution of the instrument, the questionnaire was evaluated by the President and the Executive Director of the Alberta School Trustees' Association, a former trustee, two principals (one in a large urban district and the other in a county), a trustee, a graduate student in Educational Administration, and a parent. All the individuals were interviewed as they reviewed the questionnaire. Their suggestions were noted on each questionnaire. The final draft of the questionnaire reflected the recommendations given by the group. Appendix A includes a copy of the instrument.

DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire was sent to the selected chairmen and reeves from a list supplied by the office of Executive

Director of the Alberta School Trustees' Association. The A.S.T.A. supplied, on request, the names of the chairmen, whether the school system was a district (public or separate), a division, a county, a consolidated district or an appointed trustee for a district or division. Inasmuch as there were more districts than divisions or counties, or "other", all districts were classified by size and whether public or separate. All large districts were chosen and a random selection of the small public and separate districts were selected.

The Offices of the President and the Executive Director were very supportive of the project. A copy of the letter of support, explanation of the project and request for trustee participation is included in Appendix B.

The questionnaires were numbered. All participants of the project were given written assurance of confidentiality. All participants were also assured that a summary of the findings would be forwarded to them upon the completion of the project. Follow-up reminders were sent to those whose questionnaire was not received after three weeks. A copy of the reminder letter is included in Appendix B.

TRUSTEE RESPONSE

The questionnaire was sent to two distinct groups; school board trustee chairmen, and county trustee reeves. A total of 129 were mailed. Of the 100 school board trustee chairmen questionnaires mailed, 70 were returned. Of the 29 reeves surveyed, 13 or 45 percent was received. It should be noted that there are 81 districts and consolidated districts, 30 school divisions, and 30 counties in Alberta. Of the 81 districts and consolidated districts, there are only 18 of these with a population of 2,000 or more students. Of the 30 counties, 29 were surveyed. One county was omitted, by error, in the mailing list.

The responses of the trustees and the reeves by type of jurisdiction are reported in Table 1. Inasmuch as there is a large number of districts whose student population is below 2,000, the trustee representativeness on the basis of provincial student population is indicated in table 2. In Table 2, the responses of the trustees to the questionnaire are reported as a percentage of the total provincial student population and as a percentage of the student population the surveyed trustees represented. For example, the urban trustees, who returned their questionnaires represented a far greater proportion of students than their actual numbers. The 25 districts and consolidated districts represented, in fact, 57.20 percent of the provincial student population and the 45 divisions and counties represented 27 percent of the provincial student population. All these trustees, however, represented 84.20 percent of the total provincial student population.

Table 1

Trustee and Reeve Response to the Questionnaire by type of Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction type	Number Mailed	Number Returned	Percent Returned
Districts and others	40	25	62.5
Divisions	30	22	73.3
Counties	30	23	76.7
sub-total	100	70	70.0
County Reeves	29	13	44.8
Total	129	83	65.5

Table 2

Trustee Responses by Type of Jurisdiction and Percentage of Total Student Enrollment

	percent of provincial enrollment by jurisdiction	
Type of Jurisdiction	Selected for the Survey	Representativeness of Return
Districts and others (65.57% of provincial student enrollment)	61.78[2]	57.20
Divisions (14.36% of provincial student enrollment)	14.36	10.93
Counties (20.07% of provincial student enrollment)	19.60	16.07
Total	95.74	84.20

[1] Based on A.S.T.A. September 1982 figures.

[2] The forty out of 81 districts and consolidated districts have 61.78 percent of the student population.

STATISTICAL PROCEDURES AND ANALYSIS

The study attempted to compile trustee perceptions on the role of schooling. The data presented in this study is both descriptive and comparative in nature. The trustees, in Part 1, were asked to answer the question on three and four point scales. In Part 2, they were asked to confirm or reject the statement with a Yes or No response, and in Part 3, the trustees were asked to agree or disagree with a given statement. Inasmuch as the trustees were asked to respond on a limited scale, the responses are reported in percentages only with the exceptions of the rank ordering of the responses in Part 1. The rank ordering is reported in percentages but based on the mean of each question.

Two parts of the questionnaire were analysed to determine their reliability coefficients. More specifically, the equal-length and unequal-length Spearman-Brown prophecy formula was utilized to predict the reliability of the questionnaire. According to the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula, Part 1 of the questionnaire, which asks how often certain issues are discussed at board meetings, has a predicting sensitivity of .86. In other words, the inferences drawn from the data were very probably an accurate reflection of the respondents' responses. The second section of Part 1 asks the trustees to judge how well the schools are handling specific issues. According to the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula, this part has a predicting sensitivity of .91. Part 3 of the questionnaire, which asks the trustees to give their opinions on specific educational issues, has a predicting sensitivity of .45. According to Ferguson (1976:434), a questionnaire having a .50 or less correlation coefficient is not unusual. In part 2 of the questionnaire, the questions were not organized for a comparison on an odd-even basis. Specific questions on specified areas of the School Act were asked. Each question had a specific objective of its own and did not necessarily relate to any other question within each section. The Spearman-Brown prophecy formula was, therefore, not utilized to predict sensitivity.

This study also attempted to compare the questionnaire answers of the two types of elected trustees. The study, therefore, questioned whether or not the method by which the trustees were elected had any influence on their perceptions of their role as trustee.

The T test was used to make this comparison of the trustees who were elected directly by the public with the trustees who were elected as councillors for the county and became automatically members of the Board of Education for the County. The appointed trustees were grouped with the elected trustees and not the trustee-councillors.

According to Ferguson (1976:168, 234), the T test can best be used if the population being tested does not vary markedly from the normal population distribution. Beaudry (1978), in a study of the Alberta trustee, suggested that the trustee population did not vary markedly from the population in general. The population of the trustees was deemed to fall within the criteria established by the studies of Ferguson. The population of the trustees was, therefore, assumed to have homegeneity of variance (homescedasticity) (Ferguson, 1976: 234).

SUMMARY

The data for the study was collected by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire had been validated by two trustees, two Alberta School Trustees' Association personnel, a parent, a graduate student, and two principals.

In addition to a random selection of chairmen from the districts, chairmen from all divisions and counties and all the reeves were surveyed. A response rate of 70% of the trustees and 44.8 percent of the reeves was recorded.

The SPSS and DERS computer programs assisted in providing the necessary data for analysis. A detailed analysis of the data compiled from the questionnaire is presented in the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXPERIENCE PROFILE OF THE TRUSTEE

In this chapter, the experience profile of the trustee, of the trustee as chairman, and of the councillor-trustee as reeve, is reported. The chairman, as indicated by the literature and research conducted in Canada and the United States, plays an important leadership role in the administration of school boards. Does the level of experience of the chairmen and/or the reeves as trustees also influence the decision-making process in the administration of the school boards?

EXPERIENCE PROFILE

Trustee

A very large majority of school board chairmen, in Alberta, are experienced trustees. The study indicates that the majority of the chairmen of the boards and the reeves of the counties have seven or more years of experience. The majority of the chairmen and reeves have served as trustee or councillor-trustee for at least two terms, with each term lasting three years. As is shown in Table 3, 61 percent of the trustees, who responded to the questionnaire, have had seven or more years of experience as trustee.

Table 3

Years of Experience as Trustee

Years of Experience -The Trustee-	Number	% of Total
1 - 3 years	13	15.9
4 - 6 years	17	20.7
7 or more years	50	61.0
Not Available	03	03.6
Total	83	100.0

Chairman

Even though the majority of the chairmen have had long tenure as trustee, their tenure as chairmen is fairly short. Approximately 60 percent of the chairmen have had less than three years of tenure as chairman compared with 20 percent who have had more than seven years of tenure as chairman. In table 4 the number and the percentage of chairmen in each of the three experience categories is reported.

Table 4

Years of Experience as Chairman of the Board of Education

Years of Experience -The Chairman-	Number	% of Total
1 - 3 years	42	60
4 - 6 years	14	20
7 or more years	14	20
Total	83	100

Reeve

The majority of reeves have had longer tenure as trustees and reeves than the majority of chairmen. Approximately 53 percent of the reeves have seven or more years of experience. There was, however, a fairly large number of new reeves. Approximately 31 percent of the reeves have one to three years of experience with the remaining 16 percent of the reeves having four to six years as councillor and reeve. The pattern of the trustee, as reeve, was the reverse to that of the trustee as chairman. This pattern of long tenure as reeve may be changing to the pattern of the chairman where the reeve may have long tenure as councillor but not necessarily long tenure as reeve. This supposition cannot be verified from the limited data of this study. The data at the A.S.T.A office did, however, indicate that the number of councillors on the county council was much smaller, in general, than the number of trustees and councillors on the county board of education. The size of the county council may have influenced the stability of tenure whereas the larger size and the larger representation outside the county council on the board of education may influence shorter chairman tenure.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXPERIENCE

The professional staffs of the central board offices were becoming more knowledgable and skillful in the running of the school systems whereas the trustee was not able to offset the professional skills with better trustee training.

The trustees in turn were becoming more dependent on the recommendations of the professional staffs for direction. Research indicated that the professional staffs were becoming more influential because they tended to remain at their job longer than the trustees who were their political bosses (Coleman, 1973). It is significant that in Alberta, the majority of trustee-chairmen or reeves have been elected for more than two terms and therefore can begin to balance the knowledge and skill levels of the professional with that of his/her lengthy experience as trustee.

According to the research of Proudfoot (1962), the median experience for Alberta trustees was 4.5 years and that of Oregon, which was reported by Tiedt (1961) and noted in the Proudfoot research, was 4.7 years of experience. This length of experience tended to be lower than the usual findings (Proudfoot, 1962:79).

Proudfoot did not equate experience and influence together. He was mainly concerned with the degree of trustee influence in the decision making process as measured against the socio-economic status of the school board members. Proudfoot (1962:160) did conclude that the degree of influence tended "to range over many areas of school board decisions." He did, however, report an example of a chairman who demonstrated substantial influence over the other members. Proudfoot (1962:46) stated that:

> The actions of other members of this school board substantiated what the influence ranking scale later proved to be the case--she was a very influential individual.

Proudfoot's (1962:160) study further suggested that:

> The attitudes of school board members who are more influential tend to be different from the attitudes of school board members who are less influential in school board decisions. This tendency appears in the areas of teacher personnel, curriculum, and school buildings.

Beaudry (1978:57) reported that only 26 percent of all the trustees had eight or more years of experience. He further reported that 56 percent were new trustees with less than three years of experience. Sixty-one percent of the trustees who were surveyed in this study have seven or more years of experience. This is the converse to the Beaudry study. Beaudry further reported that 75 percent of the trustees were extremely active in community affairs. Beaudry's observation on trustee involvement in the community was also confirmed in the Proudfoot study.

Proudfoot (1962) suggested that influence and the socio-economic background of the trustee had a positive effect on the decision making process. Iannaccone and Lutz (1970) and Cistone (1976) agreed that trustees are recruited from a narrow socio-economic background, but disagreed that their narrow socio-economic status made them passive captives of their group. They argued to the contrary. Bryce (1980) and Curran (1978) in turn suggested that the chairman of the board of trustees represented or personified the wishes of the board. They were, therefore, influential in the board decision making process. If we assume that Bryce (1980), Curran (1978), Iannaccone and Lutz (1970) and Cistone (1976) were correct in their analysis of the trustee and that the

Chairman of the Board of Trustees has that decisive influential role in the decision making process, it is, therefore, significant that the majority of trustees who are chairmen have had more than seven years of experience as trustee. They may, as suggested by Proudfoot (1962:46), have substantial influence over the other members of the board. That influence of the chairman may be the only method by which the Board of Trustees has influence over the highly trained central board office administrative staff.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the years of experience of the chairmen of boards of education as well as that of reeves is reported. The data indicates that the trustees, who are chairmen of the boards of education, have long tenure as trustees but a shorter period of tenure as chairmen. The reverse is true of the reeve, he/she has had long tenure as trustee and as reeve.

It is significant to note that the tenure of the trustees in Alberta may have an influencing factor over the control of education by the better trained professional staffs.

CHAPTER V

BOARD MEETINGS: The Frequency of Discussion on Selected Topics

The attitude of trustees towards education is often reflected by how often they discuss selected educational issues. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the data resulting from the question: How often does the board discuss the following (issues or items)?

There was an attempt in this part of the questionnaire to gather information on five broad educational issues. For example, under the sub-topic of budgets, the questions asked of the trustee dealt with money and control issues. The roles of the professional staff dealt with the roles of the trustee and the principal as supervisor of instruction as examples. The sub-topic dealing with students and teachers dealt with bussing, class size student counselling services, and teacher promotion as examples. Under the sub-topic of curriculum and examination, the questions dealt with issues such as the curriculum materials component and the external controls that the Department of Education exercises over the boards. The fifth sub-topic of questions dealt with the political influences and alternatives that the trustees are having to cope with such as the school-community public relations and private schools.

Trustees were asked to state how often they discussed, during board meetings, the items pertaining to a) budgets,

b) roles of the superintendent, principal, and teacher, c) students and teachers, d) curriculum and external examinations, and e) politico-educational issues in schooling.

The trustee responses are reported in rank order in percentages. The rank order was determined on the basis of the mean of the three percentages.

BUDGETS

Trustees, as is shown in Table 5, were very concerned with budgets. This was an expected response. Other studies on trustee perceptions indicated that budgets were of prime consideration for the Boards of Education (Stapley, 1957). A very large majority of trustees (81%) stated that budgets, in general, were discussed often. The term "often" was not defined for the respondants, but in the validation stage, often was understood to mean at the majority of board meetings. It would, therefore, seem that trustees agreed that they devoted most of their board meeting time on finances. The trustees further stated that they spent a great deal of their time in discussing the Department of Education controls over the financing of board operations. Approximately 62 percent stated that this topic was discussed often. It should be noted, however, that the trustees do not seem to be too concerned with the individual school budgets. Only 28 percent stated that this topic was discussed often and 11 percent stated that individual school budgets were never discussed. This should not be taken as a negative statement, but instead as a possible statement of fact that most boards do not have school-based budgets. In Table 5 the concerns for budgets and the Department of Education control over finance by the trustees is clearly illustrated..

Table 5

Discussion of Budgets at School Board Meetings

Number	Questionnaire statements	% Often	% Occas.	% Never
20.	The Department of Education control over school finance.	62.2	32.9	04.9
28.	Budgets (in general).	81.7	18.3	00.0
29.	Budgets for the central office.	42.7	52.4	04.9
30.	Budgets for each individual school.	28.0	59.8	11.0

ROLES OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Trustees were asked to respond to six questions on the roles of the professional staff. Two roles were discussed the most. The role of the superintendent and that of the trustee were discussed often and the role of the teacher was discussed much less frequently. Trustees (75.6%) stated that the role of the teacher was discussed occasionally. The role of the principal as supervisor of instruction and instructional leader were also discussed occasionally by 50 percent or more of the trustees. It should be noted that approximately four percent of the trustees stated that their role as trustee was never discussed. This percentage may be partially related to the number of appointed official trustees who responded. The role of the principal as supervisor was also never discussed by 7.3 percent of the trustees. As is shown in Table 6, the trustees placed great emphasis on the role of the superintendent and of the trustee. This emphasis on discussing the role of the superintendent was also indicated in the study by Stapley (1957).

Table 6

Discussion of the Roles of the Professional Staff at School Board Meetings

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Often	% Occas.	% Never
1.	Role of the teacher in the classroom.	20.7	75.6	03.7
2.	Role of the principal.	35.4	63.4	01.2
3.	Role of the superintendent and the central office.	48.8	50.0	01.2
14.	The principal as supervisor of instruction.	32.9	59.8	07.3
32.	The role of the trustee as it relates to policy decision-maker.	43.9	52.4	03.7
33.	The role of the principal as it relates to instructional leader.	32.9	62.2	04.9

SCHOOL OPERATIONS: The Student and the Teacher

Fifteen questions asked of the trustees in areas which concern the students and the teachers consisted of five general questions, five questions that are student related, and five questions on teacher related issues.

General School Operations

When asked how often they discussed the hiring of personnel and the staffing of schools, 43.9 percent and 52.4 percent of the trustees responded that these two topics were discussed often. They also discussed class size fairly often (45.1%), but discussed the issue of school-student-staff morale much less than hiring, class size, and staffing. Some trustees (7.3%) stated that they never discussed the issue of school morale. The trustees were also asked how often they discussed the bus routing. Approximately 35 percent of the trustees responded that this topic was discussed often. As is shown is Table 7, there is an equal division of the discussion level between often and occasional with a slight majority of the trustees responding in the occasional category.

Students

In general, trustees did not often seem to discuss student related issues. The issue of the learning environment for students was the only exception. Trustees stated that this issue was discussed fairly often (42.7%) with only 2.4 percent stating this issue was never discussed. The trustees were also asked if mainstreaming of students and the guidance program for student placement was ever discussed. The issue of mainstreaming was discussed often by

23.2 percent of the respondents with 12.2 percent stating that this item was never discussed at board meetings. The guidance program was seldom discussed. In fact, 14.6 percent of the trustees stated that the guidance program was never discussed at board meetings. The trustees were also asked if student activities and the student progress reporting system was discussed at the board meetings. Only 3.7 percent stated that student activities was discussed often while 15.9 percent stated that the student progress reporting system to parents was discussed often. As is shown in Table 7, a very large percentage of student related issues were occasionally discussed with a fairly high percentage of trustees stating that these issues were never discussed.

Teachers

Of the five questions on teacher related issues, only one question was discussed often: namely the issue of working conditions for teachers. Approximately 36 percent stated that this was discussed often while 6.1 percent stated that the issue was never discussed. The issues of termination of contracts, discipline of teachers, and promotion of teachers were low on their discussion priority list. The trustees were also asked about the role of the teacher as a model for the students. Fifty eight percent stated that this issue was discussed occasionally with the remainder of trustees equally divided on often or never. A very large majority of trustees seemed to indicate that the teacher related issues were only occasionally discussed as is shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Discussion of School Operations -The Student and the Teacher- at School Board Meetings

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Often	% Occas.	% Never
	GENERAL			
4.	School bus routing.	35.4	58.5	04.9
5.	Hiring of personnel (teachers, support, etc.).	43.9	52.4	02.4
9.	Class size.	45.1	53.7	01.2
15.	School-student-staff morale.	36.6	56.1	07.3
26.	Staffing of schools (in general).	52.4	46.3	01.2
	STUDENTS			
6.	Mainstreaming of handicapped or disadvantaged students.	23.2	64.6	12.2
11.	Student activities such as dances.	3.7	74.4	22.0
12.	Learning environment for students.	42.7	54.9	02.4
22.	Student progress reporting to the parents.	15.9	69.5	13.4
31.	The guidance program in terms of testing and counselling of students for placement.	13.4	72.0	14.6
	TEACHERS			
16.	Working conditions for teachers.	36.6	57.3	06.1
21.	Termination of teacher (certified personnel) contract.	11.0	84.1	03.7
23.	The teacher as a model for the students.	24.4	58.5	17.1
25.	Discipline of teachers for breach of Board policy or regulations.	3.7	69.5	26.8
27.	Promotion of teachers (to supervisor, principal, department head, etc,).	18.3	75.6	06.1

Curriculum and External Examination

When asked if they discussed curriculum and/or external examination issues, the trustees responded that the issue of external examination was only occasionally. The choice of curriculum and the changes in curriculum were also occasionally discussed. External examinations and curriculum materials issues were never discussed by 9.8 percent of the trustees. As is shown in Table 8, a very large majority of trustees stated that these three issues were occasionally discussed at the board meetings.

Table 8

Discussion of Curriculum and External Examination Items at School Board Meetings

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Often	% Occas.	% Never
10.	External examination of students by the Department of Education.	11.0	78.0	09.8
18.	The choice of curriculum material.	15.9	74.4	09.8
19.	The changes in curriculm as mandated by the Department of Education.	22.0	73.2	04.9

ALTERNATIVES:Politico-educational issues

Concern is often expressed in the press and at all education levels over the issues of private and of alternate schools. The questionnaire asked the trustees if they discussed the issue of having alternate schools within the districts. Very few trustees seemed to consider this issue had any urgency. In fact, 37.8 percent of the trustees stated that this issue was never discussed at board meetings. Trustees were also asked if the issue of private schools was discussed at the board meetings. In both questions 7.3 percent of the trustees stated that they discussed these issues often. As is shown in Table 9, the same pattern of responses occurred for both questions. A majority occasionally discussed the two issues while a third of the trustees never discussed the two issues. When asked about declining or shifting enrollment and school-community public relations, trustees stated that these two latter issues were discussed often. For example, the issue of declining or shifting enrollment ranked second in importance in priority of discussion at the board meetings. The issue of school-community public relations, as is shown in Table 10, was ranked in the upper half of the 32 ranked items.

Table 9

Discussion of ALTERNATIVES -Politico-educational Issues- at School Board Meetings

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Often	% Occas.	% Never
7.	Alternate schools.	7.3	54.9	37.8
8.	Private schools.	7.3	58.5	32.9
13.	School-community public relations environment.	40.2	54.9	03.7
24.	Declining or shifting enrollments.	61.0	36.6	02.4

DISCUSSION OF SELECTED ITEMS AT THE BOARD MEETINGS

A RANK ORDERING OF THE RESPONSES

The manner and the importance that a board places on an issue may be reflected by how often the board discusses the item at board meetings. For example, budgets are deemed very important to the trustees and are, therefore, discussed often whereas alternate schools within the district was the least discussed of all the items and may, therefore, be deemed by the trustees to be the least importance. The study suggests that importance of discussion can be linked with board priority of issues because an issue that is discussed often must surely be of more importance to the boards' educational priorities than an item which is seldom or never discussed at the board meetings. In the following paragraphs, each of the five identified areas such as budgets, roles, students and teachers, curriculum and external examinations, and the politico-educational issues will be commented upon.

On the basis of frequency of discussion, of the four budgets questions, two of the issues, namely budgets (in general) and the Department of Education control over school finance received the most discussion. Budgets for the central office was in the upper half of the ranking list with the budgets for the individual schools being in the lower half of the rank ordering of all the questions.

The role of the superintendent and the role of the trustee was deemed to be of importance in that it was discussed often at board meetings. The role of the principal and of the teacher were ranked above to average of importance in discussion at the board meetings. All of these items were ranked in the upper half of the 32 rank ordered items.

Seven of the 15 questions dealing with student or teacher related issues were deemed by the trustees to be of high to above average of importance in discussion at the board meetings. Of the seven items discussed, the trustees felt that staffing, class size, the hiring of staffs and the learning environment for students were discussed in that order of frequency. Such questions as mainstreaming, termination of teacher contract, the teacher as a model, the guidance programs and student activities, as is indicated in Table 10, were of less importance to the trustees in their discussion priorities.

Curriculum discussions were not deemed to be of high priority in the trustee discussion of items at the board meetings. For example, as shown in Table 10, the issues of external examinations by the Department of Education and the curriculum changes mandated by the department of education ranked 19th and 27th in a ranked list of 32 issues.

Trustees were asked to respond to four politico-educational issues. Declining enrollments ranked very high in the frequency of discussions in comparison to the issue of private schools which ranked second last in importance of discussion at the board meetings. As is shown in Table 10, the trustees discussed more often declining enrollments and school-community public relations than they discussed private or alternative schooling within the district.

Table 10

Discussion of Selected Issues at Board Meetings
A Rank Ordering of the Responses

Rank Order	Questionnaire Statements	% Often	% Occas.	% Never
1.	Budgets (in general).	81.7	18.3	00.0
2.	Declining or shifting enrollments.	61.0	36.6	02.4
3.	The Department of Education control over school finance.	62.2	32.9	04.9
4.	Staffing of schools (in general).	52.4	46.3	01.2
5.	Role of the superintendent and the central office.	48.8	50.0	01.2
6.	Class size.	45.1	53.7	01.2
7.	Hiring of personnel, (teachers, support, etc.).	43.9	52.4	02.4
8.	The role of the trustees as it relates to policy decision-making.	43.9	52.4	03.7
9.	Learning environment for students.	42.7	54.9	02.4
10.	Budgets for the central office.	42.7	52.4	04.9
11.	School-community public relations environment.	40.2	54.9	03.7
12.	Role of the principal.	35.4	63.4	01.2
13.	Working conditions for teachers.	36.6	57.3	06.1
14.	School bus routing.	35.4	58.5	04.9

Table 10 (continued)

Discussion of Selected Issues at Board Meetings
A Rank Ordering of the Responses

Rank Order	% Often	% Occas.	% Never
15. School-community-staff morale.	36.6	56.1	07.3
16. The role of the principal as it relates to instructional leader.	32.9	62.2	04.9
17. The principal as supervisor of instruction.	32.9	59.8	07.3
18. Role of the teacher in the classroom.	20.7	75.6	03.7
19. The changes in curriculum as mandated by the Department of Education.	22.0	73.2	04.9
20. Budgets for each individual school.	28.0	59.8	11.0
21. Promotion of teachers (to supervisor, principal, department head, etc.)	18.3	75.6	06.1
22. Mainstreaming of handicapped or disadvantaged students.	23.2	64.6	12.2
23. The teacher as a model for the parents.	24.4	58.5	17.1
24. Termination of teacher (certified personnel) contract.	11.0	84.1	03.7
25. The choice of curriculum material.	15.9	74.4	09.8
26. Student progress reporting to the parents.	15.9	69.5	13.4
27. External examination of students by the Department of Education.	11.0	78.0	09.8

Table 10 (continued)

Discussion of Selected Issues at Board Meetings
A Rank Ordering of the Responses

Rank Order	% Often	% Occas.	% Never
28. The guidance programs in terms of testing and counselling of students for placement.	13.4	72.0	14.6
29. Student activities such as dances.	3.7	74.4	22.0
30. Discipline of teachers for breach of Board policy regulations.	3.7	69.5	26.8
31. Private schools.	7.3	58.5	32.9
32. Alternate schools within your jurisdiction.	7.3	54.9	37.8

SUMMARY

Trustees clearly indicated that they were very preoccupied with any issue which dealt with finances. If we assume that the percentage of the item is the criteria for establishing priority in discussing the items at the board meetings, budgets ranked as being discussed the most often as compared to alternative schools within the district which was discussed the least often.

Trustees indicated that such topics as the roles of superintendent, trustee, and principal ranked high on their list of priorities. They also ranked the environment of the school, whether learning, or morale, or working conditions for teachers, of equal importance to the roles of the superintendent and the trustee but ranked higher than the role of the principal and the teacher.

Other issues such as mainstreaming, teacher termination surfaced as being of relatively less importance in the discussion priority at the board meetings. .

CHAPTER VI

TRUSTEE OPINION ON SCHOOLS

Trustees were asked to judge how well the schools were handling a) budgets, b) roles of the schools' professional staff, c) students and teachers and d) the schools relations with the public. Inasmuch as this section of the questionnaire was asking for opinion on the school, the majority of the items dealt with the student and the teacher within the educational environment. Only five questions dealt with budgets, roles, and public relations. The trustee responses were then rank ordered from the most effective to the least effective handling of the issues.

THE HANDLING OF THE SCHOOL BUDGET

Trustees gave the schools a clear message of approval in the handling of the school based budgets. About half of the trustees (51.2%) felt that the school based budgets were handled well and 29.3 percent felt that the budgets were handled very well. It was noted in the previous chapter that many school systems may not have school based budgets. Approximately 16 percent of the trustees stated that school based budgets were not applicable in their school jurisdiction. Only 3.7 percent of the trustees judged the school to be handling school based budgets poorly.

THE HANDLING OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFFS' ROLE

The leadership role of the principal was judged to be handled *well* by the majority (64.6%) of trustees. Twenty four decimal four percent of the trustees felt that the leadership role was handled *very well* by the schools with 64.6 percent stating that they judged the leadership role being *well* handled by the schools. Trustees were then asked to judge the classroom instructional supervision. More than two thirds (72%) of of the trustees felt that classroom supervision was handled *well* and 12.2 percent stated that it was handled *very well*. It should also be noted, as shown in Table 11, that 13.4 percent of the trustees felt that classroom supervision was handled *poorly*.

Trustees were also asked to judge the role of the teacher as a model for the students. The majority of trustees (62.2%) felt that the teachers were handling this role *well* and 9.8 percent stated that the teacher role as model was handled *very well*. More than one quarter of the trustees (25.6%), however, stated that the teacher's role as a model was *poorly* handled.

According to the majority of the trustees, the roles of the principal, the teacher, and classroom instructional supervision were judged to have been *well* handled. There was, however, a minority of trustees who judged that these three roles were *poorly* handled. This minority as shown in Table 11, varied from a high of 25.6 percent on the item of teacher role as model to the students to a low of 11 percent on the item of the instructional leadership role of principals.

Table 11

Trustee Judgement on How Well the Professioanl StaffS' Role was Handled

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Very Well	% Well	% Poorly
39.	The teacher's role as a model for the students.[1]	09.8	62.2	25.6
51.	The leadership role of the principal.	24.4	64.6	11.0
52.	Classroom instructional supervision.[1]	12.2	72.0	13.4

[1] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

THE HANDLING OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS:

The Student and the Teacher

Trustees were asked to judge 15 selected items on student and teacher related school topics. The majority (9 out of 15) of the issues were student oriented with the remaining six issues being equally divided between general items such class size and teacher items such as teacher working conditions.

General School Operations

In judging the school learning environment, the trustees stated, with a large majority (89%), that the schools were handling this question well to very well. When asked how the schools were coping with class size, a majority (89%) of trustees stated that the schools were handling class size well to very well. Trustees were further asked about the discipline on school busses. According to the information gleaned from many sources, bus discipline is handled differently from juridiction to jurisdiction. In some jurisdictions the school principals do the disciplining and in others the central office handle this problem. Regardless of the method, trustees seemed to be reasonably satisfied with the results. As is shown in Table 12, there was a minority who were not happy with the manner in which the schools are handling school learning environment, class size and/or bus discipline.

Students

A majority of trustees judged the schools to be handling student related items well, even though this majority is not overwhelming. There seemed to be some dissatisfaction with student suspension, student activities, and discipline problems. Approximately 15 to 19 percent of the trustees stated that the schools were handling student suspension, student activities, and discipline problems poorly. Trustees further seemed to be dissatisfied with the manner in which the general counselling services as compared to the testing of students for learning disabilities were being efficiently utilized by the schools. For example, only 11 percent stated that the counselling services in the schools were handled very well as compared to 45.1 percent of the trustees who stated that the testing of students for learning disabilities was handled very well.

The trustees were also asked to judge how well the schools handled student discipline. Trustees would appear to be satisfied with student discipline. Nineteen decimal five percent stated that the schools handled discipline very well with only 18.3 percent stating that the schools were handling student discipline poorly.

When asked to comment on the reporting of student progress, the trustees were very satisfied with the schools. More than a quarter of the trustees (25.6%) stated that the schools handled the reporting of student progress to parents very well. The trustees were also asked to judge the student learning environment as compared to the school learning environment. Their judgement of the student environment did not vary markedly from the school learning environment. Nearly three quarters (73.2%) stated that the student learning environment was handled well.

As is shown in Table 12, trustees seemed to be satisfied with attendance and suspension of students, reporting of student progress and testing of students for learning disabilities but less satisfied with student discipline, the learning environment, and the counselling of students.

Teachers

Nearly a third (31.7%) of the trustees stated that the schools handled the teacher working conditions very well. Only 11.0 percent stated that the student-teacher rapport was very well handled and only 9.8 percent stated that the efficient organization and use of student instruction was very well handled. According to the comments inserted at this point by the trustees, it would appear that some trustees misinterpreted the question of efficient organization and use of student instruction. The fairly high N.A. responses may be an indication that the item was poorly worded and, therefore, open to misinterpretation. For example, one trustee felt that the questionnaire phrase of "...use of student instruction (question 53 in Table 12)" to mean the employment of students to instruct the other students. As is shown in Table 12, trustees indicated their general satisfaction with these issues.

Table 12

Trustee Judgement on the Handling of School Operations:
The Student and the Teacher

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Very Well	% Well	% Poorly
	GENERAL			
37.	The school learning environment.[1]	18.3	70.7	09.8
40.	Handling bus discipline.[2]	19.5	58.3	13.4
41.	Class size.	28.0	61.0	11.0
	STUDENTS			
35.	Attendance of students (in general).	36.6	58.5	04.9
36.	Suspension of students.[1]	35.4	47.6	15.9

[1] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 8.5 percent of the trustees.

Table 12 (continued)

Trustee Judgement on the Handling of School Operations: The Student and the Teacher

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Very Well	% Well	% Poorly
38.	Activities for students (clubs dances, etc.).[1]	19.5	62.6	14.6
43.	Student discipline problems (smoking, drugs, etc.).[2]	19.5	59.8	18.3
44.	The reporting of student progress to parents.	25.6	68.3	06.1
45.	The efficient use of counselling services that are provided by the Board's central office.[3]	13.4	58.3	12.2
46.	The efficient use of counselling seervices in the schools.[4]	11.0	67.1	15.9
47.	The testing of students for any form of learning disabilities.	45.1	47.6	07.3
48.	Student learning environment.	18.3	73.2	08.5
	TEACHERS			
49.	Teacher working conditions.	31.7	65.9	02.4
50.	Student-teacher rapport.[5]	11.0	80.5	07.3
53.	The efficient organization and use of student instruction.[6]	09.8	73.2	09.8

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[1] Not answered by 3.6 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

[3] Not answered by 15.9 percent of the trustees.

[4] Not answered by 6.1 percent of the trustees.

[5] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

[6] Not answered by 7.3 percent of the trustees.

THE SCHOOL'S RELATION WITH THE PUBLIC

The trustees were asked to judge how well the schools handled the school-community public relations. More than one quarter (25.6%) of the trustees were very pleased with the manner in which the school handled the school-community public relations. Another 58.5 percent stated that the schools handled their public relations well. Only 15.9 percent stated that the schools handled the school-community public relations poorly.

TRUSTEE JUDGEMENT OF THE SCHOOLS ON SELECTED ITEMS

A RANK ORDERING OF THE RESPONSES

In the following paragraphs, the data are reported and compared in four identified areas of budgets, roles, students and teachers, and school-community public relations. Based on trustee responses, the data were rank-ordered from the most effective to the least effective. This rank order was determined on the basis of the mean of the four percentages for each question.

The school based budgets were judged third highest in the rank ordering. There was, however, a fairly large group (15.9%) of trustees who reported that this issue was not applicable in their jurisdiction. Of the trustees who responded to the school based budget question, 34.8 percent stated that it was handled very well and another 60.9 percent stated that it was handled well. The remaining 4.3 percent of the trustees judged the schools to be handling school based budgets poorly.

Trustees judged only one of the three roles of the schools' professional staff to be handled very well or well The leadership role of the principal(s) was in the lower upper half of the ranking list while the classroom instructional supervision and the role of the teacher as a model for the students were listed in the lower second half. It would appear that trustees have judged the principal(s) leadership role to be very well or well handled in the schools. Trustees did not indicate that the classroom instructional supervision was handled to their satisfaction nor did they judge the role of the teacher as a model for the students to be handled at a satisfactory level when the items are compared on a continuum.

The student attendance, the teacher working conditions, the student suspension, the reporting of student progress to parents, and the class size were judged to be handled more effectively than student and school learning environment, bus discipline, activities of students, student-teacher rapport, and student discipline. Of the three student services items, the trustees judged the testing of students for any form of learning disabilities to be handled more effectively than the counselling services by the board's central office personnel or the services in the schools. The two counselling services, in fact, when judged on the basis of most to least effective, were ranked in the lower half of the list of the 20 items.

School-community public relations were judged by the trustees to be well and very well (84.1%) handled. In a list of 20 items, it ranked ninth. As is shown it Table 13, 15.9 percent of the trustees, however, judged that the school-community public relations was poorly handled. This ranks third highest in poorly ratings, if suspension of students and the efficient use of counselling services is ranked equally to school-community public relations, as compared to student discipline problems which was poorly judged by 18.3 percent of the trustees and the teacher as a model for students which was poorly judged by 25.6 percent of the trustees.

Table 13

Trustee Judgement on the Schools' Handling of Selected Topics: A rank ordering of the responses

Rank Order	Questionnaire Statements	% Very Well	% Well	% Poorly	% N.A.
1.	The testing of students for any form of learning disabilities.	45.1	47.6	07.3	
2.	Attendance of students.	36.6	58.5	04.9	
3.	School based budgets.	29.3	51.2	03.7	15.9
4.	Teacher working conditions.	31.7	65.9	02.4	
5.	Suspension of students.	35.4	47.6	15.9	01.2
6.	The reporting of student progress to parents.	25.6	68.3	06.1	
7.	Class size.	28.0	61.0	11.0	

Table 13 (continued)

Trustee Judgement on the Schools' Handling of Selected Topics: A rank ordering of the responses

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Very Well	% Well	% Poorly	% N.A.
8.	The leadership role of the principal(s).	24.4	64.6	11.0	
9.	School-community public relations.	25.6	58.5	15.9	
10.	Student learning environment.	18.3	73.2	08.5	
11.	School learning environment.	18.3	70.7	09.8	01.2
12.	Handling bus discipline.	19.5	58.5	13.4	08.5
13.	Activities for students (clubs, dances, etc.).	19.5	62.2	14.6	03.6
14.	Student-teacher rapport.	11.0	80.5	07.3	01.2
15.	Student discipline problems (smoking, drugs, etc.).	19.5	59.8	18.3	02.4
16.	The efficient use of counselling services that are provided by the Board's central office.	13.4	58.5	12.2	15.9
17.	The efficient organization and use of student instruction.	09.8	73.2	09.8	07.3
18.	Classroom instructional supervision.	12.2	72.0	13.4	02.4
19.	The efficient use of counselling services in the schools.	11.0	67.1	15.9	06.1
20.	The teacher's role as a model for the students.	09.8	62.2	25.6	02.4

SUMMARY

The trustees were asked to judge how well the schools were handling specific educational items. Trustee opinion on how well the schools were handling educational items may have far reaching implications on the schools in that jurisdiction. For example, the trustees deemed that the schools were handling best the testing of students for any form of learning disabilities. Does this mean that trustees will more readily favour expenditures on the testing program? Trustees in turn stated that the role of the teacher as a model for the students was handled the least best of the 20 items. Does this imply, for example, that the teacher-trustee relations will be less favourable or that the trustees do not know what to do with the teacher's role model?

On the basis of the responses being tabulated in percentages and compared on a continuum, trustees seemed to indicate their satisfaction with the testing program, the way schools are handling the class size issue, teacher working conditions, the reporting system to the parents, the attendance and suspension procedures being followed in the schools and the school based budget. Learning environment, student activities, discipline teacher-student rapport were not as effectively handled by the schools. The counselling services was also deemed to be less effectively handled than the majority of the selected items. These two services ranked 16th and 19th when listed in rank order. Trustees also ranked the leadership role of the principal(s) much higher in effectiveness than the classroom instructional supervision or the efficient use of student instruction.

The trustee opinion indicated a general satisfaction with the manner in which the schools were being operated. When comparing the trustees' responses, however, on a continuum, certain items that the trustees were asked to give their opinion were judged more effectively handled than others. A good example of this comparison were the testing and counselling services. The testing service was judged most effective while the counselling services were judged least effective.

CHAPTER VII

RESPONDENTS' EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT SCHOOL ACT (1970)

As agents of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, trustees make decisions guided by the Alberta School Act 1970. Part 2 of the questionnaire asked the trustees to respond to four specific areas of the Act. A statement relating to each of the areas was presented along with a series of questions relating to that statement. The intent of the questions was to establish whether or not trustee perceptions of the role of schooling was influenced by this externally imposed constraint. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse and report the data resulting from each statement and the series of questions following each of the statements.

The statements dealt with pupils (students), finance (budgets), personnel (teachers), and transportation (bussing). The trustees were requested to give their personal responses to each of the four groupings of questions.

1) THE SCHOOL ACT 1970, AS AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME, ALLOWS SCHOOL BOARDS TO SET REGULATIONS FOR PUPIL ADMITTANCE TO SCHOOLS AND SUSPENSION OF PUPILS FROM THEIR SCHOOLS.

The School Act limits the actions of the boards in areas of attendance, admission, and suspension. The trustees were asked to evaluate and/or give their opinions on whether or not they agreed with the Act on such items as admission, attendance, and suspension.

Attendance

Trustees were asked four questions on compulsory attendance. Trustees clearly indicated that they wanted the compulsory attendance regulations continued in the School Act. The trustees were then asked if the board should have the right to abolish compulsory attendance for the students prior to age 16. Thirty nine percent agreed with the statement that the boards should have that right. When asked if the board should have the right to relax the attendance rules, 54.9 percent of trustees favoured the board having the right to relax attendance regulations. A fourth question asked the trustees if they felt that the compulsory attendance regulations to the age of 16 kept a significant number of students in school. Seventy eight percent of the trustees agreed that the compulsory aspect to the attendance regulations tended to keep students in school. As is shown in Table 14, trustees were fairly unified on two of the four questions. Trustees favoured having compulsory attendance regulations in the School Act and agreed that by having compulsory attendance regulations to the age of 16 a significant number of students stayed in school for a longer period of schooling.

Table 14

Pupil Attendance

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
1.	Do you agree with the School Act 1970 compulsory attendance regulations?[1]	79.3	19.5
2.	Should your Board have the right to abolish compulsory attendance prior to age 16?[1]	39.0	59.8
3.	Should your Board have the right to relax the attendance rules?	54.9	45.1
9.	Do you feel that the compulsory attendance regulations to age sixteen inclusive (16) keeps a significant number of students in school?	78.0	22.0

[1] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

Admission

A large majority (69.5%) of trustees stated that the boards should have the right to decide which students can or can not be admitted to school. However, trustees stated that they should have the right to restrict the admission of handicapped students if the jurisdiction lacked specialized programs or facilities. As is shown in Table 15, approximately two thirds agreed that the boards should have the right to control admission while the other third disagreed.

Table 15

Pupil Admission

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
4.	Should your Board have the right to make final decisions as to which students can or can not be admitted into school?	69.5	30.5
5.	Should your board have the right to refuse the admission of handicapped or disadvantaged students because of the lack of essential specialized programs?[1]	69.5	29.3
6.	Should the Board have the right to refuse the admission of handicapped or disadvantaged students because of lack of facilities?[1]	70.7	28.0

[1] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

Suspension

Trustees overwhelmingly (93.9%) supported the right of the schools to suspend students from the school, for a specified time limit, as is stipulated in the School Act. They were also supportive (69.5%) of teachers having the right to suspend students from their classes for a limited specified time. Trustees further stated that they wanted to continue having the right to suspend students and the majority (64.6%) did not want the Minister to be the final authority over expulsion. As is shown in Table 16, trustees stated that they supported the School Act's regulations on pupil suspension.

Table 16

Pupil Suspension

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
7.	Should the teachers have the right to suspend students from their classes for a specified time limit?	69.5	30.5
8.	Should the schools have the right to to suspend students from the schools for a specified time limit?[1]	93.9	04.9
10.	Should the Minister of Education be the final authority over students expelled by the Board?[2]	32.9	64.6

[1] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

2) THE SCHOOL ACT SETS OUT THE BROAD GUIDELINES FOR THE FINANCING OF EDUCATION

According to the trustees, budgets are discussed very often at the school board meetings. The trustees were asked to respond to specific questions dealing with local versus provincial control of finances and board influence in financing alternative programs.

Local versus provincial control of finance

There was strong desire expressed by the trustees to preserve local control of education. Four questions were asked on the Foundation Program and the local property tax. Trustees were asked if the Foundation Program should pay for all education costs. Approximately 76 percent stated 'No'. Trustees were then asked if the local property tax payer should pay for a portion of the costs of education. Slightly over 86 percent stated 'Yes'. The trustees clearly favoured some local property tax responsibilities. Trustees were, however, split on the issue of provincial control in education finance. A small majority (53.7%) felt that the province should continue to have the control they presently have, even though the province contributes, on the average 60 percent of the operational costs. Even though trustees were split on the issue of financial control, a larger majority (64.4%) stated that boards do not have the financial flexibility to offer alternatives to the parents. As is shown in Table 17, trustees want local control over education but the trustees found the present financing system inflexible in meeting the needs of the students.

Board Influence in Financing Alternative Programs

According to the trustees, boards do not have the freedom to respond to parent requests for alternatives in education. Only 34.1 percent of the trustees felt that boards have enough financial flexibility, whereas 64.4 percent disagreed. When asked what kind of alternatives they supported, trustees strongly favoured the establishment of alternate programs under their direction, but fewer trustees favoured the establishment of alternate schools within their jurisdiction. Eighty nine percent favoured the school board having the right to establish alternate school programs, but only 52.4 percent favoured the establishment of alternate

Table 17

Local versus Provincial Control of Finance

Number	Questionnaire Statrements	% Yes	% No
1.	Should the Foundation Program pay for all education costs?	24.4	75.6
2.	Since the province pays on the average, sixty (60) percent of the operational costs of the boards. Should the province continue to have the control they currently hold over school boards?[1]	53.7	42.7
3.	Do you believe that the local property tax should continue to pay for a portion of the cost of education?	86.6	13.4
4.	Does the present financing of education allow your Board flexibility to offer alternatives to the children of parents who make such requests?[2]	34.1	64.4

[1] Not answered by 3.7 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

schools. When further asked if they favoured the establishment of alternate programs within schools under the direction of their own board 86.6 percent of the trustees stated 'Yes'. The trustees, as is shown in Table 18, indicated strong support for financial flexibility on the principle of alternate school programs within the present structure but not in establishing alternate schools within their own jurisdiction.

Table 18

Board Influence in Financing of Alternative Programs

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
5.	Do you believe that local school boards should be allowed to offer alternate school programs to the students?	89.0	11.0
6.	Should the alternate private schools obtain the same per pupil grants as local boards?[1]	34.1	63.4
7.	Are you in favour of establishing alternate programs within schools under the direction of your Boards?[2]	86.6	12.2
8.	Are you in favour of establishing alternate schools under the direction of your Board?[1]	52.4	45.1

[1] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

3) THE SCHOOL ACT SETS THE REGULATIONS FOR BOARDS TO FOLLOW IN THE HIRING, TRANSFERING, CHANGE OF DESIGNATION, AND THE TERMINATION OF A TEACHER'S CONTRACT.

In 1970 the Alberta Legislature passed a new School Act. There was a transfer of decision making from the provincial level to the local level. According to Caldwell and Tymko (1980:7), the role of the school board was to be "enhanced". The trustees were asked to evaluate and/or give their opinion on whether or not they agreed that the School Act enhanced their ability to deal with declining or shifting enrollments, combined classes, transfers, and teacher evaluation.

The trustees were asked if declining or shifting enrollments were a problem. A very large percentage (96.3%) of the trustees stated that declining enrollment was a problem. Because declining or shifting enrollments often demands a re-organization of the classes, trustees were also asked if they were in agreement with the combining of two or more classes in grades one to nine in order to keep a reasonable teacher-pupil ratio. A very large majority of trustees (81.7%) stated that they were in agreement with combining classes at the grades one to nine. When asked if they would combine two or more classes in grades 10-12, regardless of the teacher-pupil ratio, only 30.5 percent stated 'Yes'. Trustees seemed to be prepared to combine grades at the elementary-junior high level but not at the senior high school level as is shown in Table 19. Three questions dealt with teacher transfers, teacher termination and teacher evaluation. Approximately two thirds of the trustees felt that teachers should be given a written reason for transfers and that performance guidelines should be included in the School Act. When asked if the present system made it too difficult for boards to terminate a teacher's contract or designation, 84.1 percent of the trustees stated 'Yes'. In table 19, the trustee responses on the questions of declining enrollments, combined classes, teacher transfers, termination, and evaluation are reported in percentages.

Table 19

Board Flexibility in Dealing with Declining or Shifting Enrollments Combined Classes, Transfer, Termination, and Evaluation of Teachers

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
1.	Do you believe that declining or shifting enrollments are a problem for school boards?	96.3	03.7
2.	Are you in agreement with combining two (2) or more classes in grades 1 to 9 in a classroom in order to keep a reasonable teacher-pupil ratio?	81.7	18.3
3.	Would you combine two or more classes in grades 10-12, regardless of the teacher-pupil ratio?	30.5	69.5
4.	Should the superintendent be required to give written reasons when teachers are transferred to another school?	63.4	36.6
5.	Do you feel that it is presently too difficult to terminate a teacher's contract or designation?	84.1	15.9
6.	Should teacher performance guidelines (evaluation criteria) be more specifically described in the School Act?	61.0	39.0

4) THE SCHOOL ACT OUTLINES THE BROAD GUIDELINES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS TO AND FROM SCHOOL.

The School Act specifies the obligations of the Boards in the bussing of students. Two sets of questions, dealing with the eligibility for bussing and grants were asked for trustee reaction.

Eligibility for Bussing

The Act specifies the distance from school a student must be to be eligible for bussing. Three questions related to eligibility for bussing were asked. The trustees were asked if the Board should provide transportation to all students. A large majority (79.3%) of the trustees stated that the Board should not have to provide transportation for all students. When asked if there should be a minimum qualifying distance for bussing eligibility, 48.8 percent stated that there should be a minimum distance. When further asked if the Board should bus students to "alternative" types of schools, only 34.1 percent stated 'Yes'. A large majority, as shown in Table 20, did not favour bussing for all students, but there was no overwhelming agreement on the question of minimal eligibility distance nor bussing to "alternative" types of schools.

GRANTS

The trustees were asked three questions on the grants system for the bussing of students as per section 72 and 165 of the School Act 1970. About 65 percent of the trustees stated that the present system of allocating the grants was not acceptable. When further asked if the present transportation grants were adequate to meet the operational costs, 82.9 percent of the trustees stated 'No'. The trustees were also asked if the province should pay the full cost of bussing the students to school. A small majority (57.3%) of the trustees agreed that the province should pay for the full costs of bussing the students. As is shown in Table 21, the trustees stated that the present system of transportation grants is not adequate, but the boards do not wish the province to pay for the full cost of transporting the students.

Table 20

Eligibility for bussing

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
1.	Should Boards provide transportation to all students?	20.7	79.3
2.	There is a present minimum distance for students to qualify for transportation grants. Should there be a minimum distance stipulated in the School Act?	48.8	51.2
3.	If parents want their student(s) to go to an "alternative" type of school under the direction of the Board, should the Board be responsible for their transportation?[1]	34.1	63.4

[1] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

SMALLER SCHOOLS

Trustees were further asked to comment on the closing of smaller schools. The closing of smaller schools did not appear to be a sensitive item to the trustees. About 58 percent of the trustees stated that they did not favour the closing of smaller schools and the transporting of students to a centrally located larger school. According to the T tests, there were no significant differences in the answers from the trustees who represented districts, divisions, or counties. The trustee answer, as shown in Table 22, would seem to indicate that this was not seen as a major problem.

Table 21

Grants for bussing students

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
4.	Is bus capacity (number of passengers) a good criterion for grant purposes?[1]	31.7	64.7
6.	Should local boards expect the province to pay the full cost of transportating students to the schools?	57.3	42.7
7.	Are the present transportation grants adequate to meet the operational costs?[2]	15.9	82.9

[1] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

Table 22

Smaller Schools

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
5.	Do you favour the closing of smaller schools and the transportation of the students to a centrally located larger school?[1]	36.6	58.5

[1] Not answered by 4.9 percent of the trustees.

SUMMARY

Opinions were elicited from the trustees on four broad issues that are outlined in the present School Act 1970. Trustees were asked to give their personal evaluation of the selected issues. Trustees favoured very strongly the continuation of student compulsory attendance regulations. The majority preferred having a regulation in the Act to give the board the right to set the regulations. The handicapped or disadvantaged child concerned trustees. Trustees wanted the board to have the right to control the admission of students when facilities or programs were not available. There was overwhelming support for the schools having the continued right to suspend students for a specified time limit and a fairly strong objection for the ministerial right to review board decisions of expelled students. Even though trustees were dissatified with the foundation program, they still favoured having the local property tax pay for a portion of the costs of education. Trustees clearly favoured the development of alternate programs under their direction. A smaller majority favoured the establishment of alternate schools. Trustees saw declining or shifting enrollment as a major problem. When asked if they would combine classes, a large majority were in agreement with combining classes in grades one to nine but when asked if they agreed to the combining of classes in grades 10 to 12, only a third were in agreement. A very large majority of trustees also stated that the present system of terminating teacher contracts or designations was too difficult. In the series of questions on bussing, grants and eligibility for bussing, trustees clearly stated that the present transportation grants structure does not meet the operational expenses. They further stated that they strongly opposed the bussing of all students but there was no overwhelming agreement if there should be a minimal distance to be eligible. There was, however, a majority of trustees who did not favour the bussing of students to "alternative" types of schools nor the bussing of students from a smaller school to a centralized larger school.

CHAPTER VIII

TRUSTEE PERCEPTIONS ON SELECTED STATEMENTS

The school board trustee is entrusted with ensuring the quality and quantity of the process of education (Bargen, 1972). Bargen further states that the process of education is probably the most important factor in society because it not only builds skills, but it also builds and develops perceptions on life.

In part 3 of the questionnaire, (see Appendix A) trustees were asked to respond to 26 selected 'belief' statements. The intent of the questions was to allow the trustees the opportunity to reflect on what they perceived to be the role of schooling. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse and report the data resulting from the given statements.

The statements of trustee belief dealt with a) parents, b) students, c) schools, d) trustees, and e) authorities such as teachers, the central office staff or the department of education.

TRUSTEE PERCEPTION OF PARENTS

The trustees were asked if the parents were supportive of the decisions the board made on their behalf. A majority (75.6%) of trustees felt that parents were supportive of the decisions made on their behalf. When asked if the parents and the trustees shared common concerns regarding the education of their children, an overwhelming majority (95.1%) agreed but the trustees also stated that parent response to specific problems when their own child was involved was very different to parent response to general concerns when the parents were not directly involved. The trustees also overwhelmingly stated (91.5%) that parents do not understand the limitations trustees have in influencing change(s). As is shown in Table 23, the trustees felt that parent support for their actions was very positive, but at the same time, the trustees felt that the parents do not understand the limitations that they have in influencing change(s).

Table 23

Trustee Perception of Parents

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
1.	I find that parents are very supportive of the decisions made their behalf by the School Board.	75.6	24.4
2.	I find that most parents share common concerns regarding the education of their children.	95.1	04.9
3.	I find that parents respond differently to educational problems if their own child is directly affected by the problem.[1]	93.9	04.9
14	I believe that parents do not realize the limitation(s) we have in influencing change(s).	91.5	08.5

[1] Not answered by 1.2 percent of trustees

TRUSTEE PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS

The trustees were asked to respond to seven questions dealing with the students. The questions dealt with such items as social and academic student problems, an understanding of the student, sex education, the gifted student, the counselling services, and ability of the board to meet all student needs.

When asked about the youth of today, trustees felt (75.6%) that they understood the young people and, therefore, felt (76.8%) that many social and academic problems that the students had in school could be solved if the students acted more responsibly. Such social problems as the grade 12 graduation activities were not regarded by the majority (52.4%) to be placing undue stress on certain students.

The trustees were asked if the school could meet the needs of all the students. An overwhelming majority (96.3%) of trustees felt that the school could not meet all the needs of all the students but at the same time, they also agreed (61%) that too little money was assigned to enrichmnent programs for the academically gifted students. When asked if such controversial information-giving programs such as sex education encouraged experimentation, 73.2 percent of the trustees stated 'No'. The trustees were then asked if they believed that the counselling services were assisting all students. More than 62 percent stated that they felt the counselling services were not assisting all the students. As shown in Table 24, the trustees felt that they undertood the student but also felt that there were limitations to the student needs that the school could meet.

Table 24

Trustee Perceptions of Students

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
4.	I feel that students could solve many of their social and academic problems if they acted more responsibly.[1]	76.8	22.0
8.	I feel at a disadvantage, in terms of understanding young people, because of the increasing complexity of our social environment.[2]	22.0	75.6
18.	I believe that exposure to sex education is likely to encourage students to experiment.[2]	24.4	73.2
21.	I believe that our schools are not able to meet all the needs of all the students.	96.3	03.7
23.	I believe that too little time and/or money is assigned to enrichment programs for the academically gifted students.[1]	61.0	37.8
25.	I believe that emphasis on grade 12 graduation for all students, regardless of academic ability, places too much stress on certain students.[1]	52.4	46.3
26.	I believe that the counselling services are assisting all students.	37.8	62.2

[1] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

TRUSTEE PERCEPTION ON THE SCHOOL

Trustees were asked to respond to nine statements that dealt with censorship, societal expectations, social problems, programs such as sex education, options, religious education, religious participation, discipline and continuity.

Only two statements of the nine statements produced a strong trustee consensus. The trustees clearly (84.1%) stated that there should be some censorship of books or films used in the schools. They also stated (93.9%) that it was important that the manners and morals of society be taught as early as possible. When asked if the schools should be involved in solving contemporary problems, 56.1 percent agreed that the school should be involved. When further asked if the school should be involved in such programs as sex education, options, religious education or religious participation in schools, the majority agreement varied from a high of 69.5 percent to a low of 58.3 percent. It would appear that the trustees, as is shown in Table 25, favoured the principle of teaching sex education, options, or religious education but fewer felt that religious participation in schools should be compulsory even though a majority (69.5 %) thought that religious education be available in schools.

The other two statements dealt with discipline and continuity from junior to senior high school. Of the two questions, only the question on discipline received extra trustee comments. A majority (67.1%) of trustees stated that the schools needed to have stricter discipline. Some trustees wrote comments beside the statement to the effect that this problem was not only a school problem but it was also a parental problem. In Table 25, the trustees' perception of the school seemed to indicate a very strong belief in some censorship of materials entering the school as well as a strong belief that the manners and morals of society should be taught as early as possible. The trustees indicated less strong belief in the other seven statements as is shown in the table.

TRUSTEE PERCEPTION ON THEIR ROLE AS TRUSTEE

Three statements dealt with the trustee's perception of his role as trustee. These three statements dealt with the influence, the sources of information, and the parental understanding of the role of trusteeship in the decision-making process.

A minority of trustees (40.2%) felt that they were expected to rely on other sources to guide them in decision-making. When asked, however, if they felt that they had limited influence over the decisions made in the name of the local school board, a majority (82.9%) of trustees disagreed with the statement. This majority (82.9%) of trustees seemed to believe that they did influence the decision-making process and yet when the trustees were asked if they felt that their role as trustee was understood by the parents, 65.9 percent stated that this role of trusteeship was not understood by the parents. As was indicated in the previous

Table 25

Trustee Perceptions on the School

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
5.	I feel that there is a need for stricter discipline in schools.[2]	67.1	30.5
6.	I feel that there should not be any censorship of books or films used in schools.	15.9	84.1
7.	I believe that it is important to teach the child as early as possible the manners and morals of society.[1]	93.9	04.9
15.	I believe that schools should not be actively involved in solving contemporary social problems.	43.9	56.1
17.	I believe that sex education should be taught in school.[2]	65.9	31.7
19.	I believe that it is right and proper that religious education in schools should be available.[3]	69.5	23.2
20.	I believe that a minimal amount of religious participation (i.e.-morning prayer) should be compulsory.[4]	58.5	37.8
22.	I believe that schools are spending too much time in teaching options.[2]	34.1	63.4
24.	I believe that continuity, especially between Jr. and Sr. High School is lacking.	47.6	52.4

[1] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

[3] Not answered by 7.3 percent of the trustees.

[4] Not answered by 3.7 percent of the trustees.

section dealing with parents, trustees overwhelmingly stated (91.5%) that parents did not understand their limitations in influencing change and yet the trustees indicated, by a large majority (82.9%), that they did not feel that they had limited influence over the decisions made in the name of the local school board. As is shown in Table 26, the trustees felt that parents did not understand their role but felt that, as trustees, they were able to influence the decision-making process of the board.

Table 26

Trustee Perception of their Role

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
10.	I feel that I have limited influence over the decisions made in the name of the local school board.	17.1	82.9
12.	I am expected to rely on other sources to guide me in decision-making.[1]	40.2	57.3
13.	I find that parents do not understand the role of a trustee.	65.9	34.1

[1] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

TRUSTEE PERCEPTIONS ON THE PROFESSIONAL STAFFS

The trustees were asked to respond to three statements that dealt with their central office, teachers, and the department of education.

The trustees were very supportive (91.5%) of their central office. They stated clearly (91.5%) that they felt that their central office listened to their opinions. When asked about the teacher role in the school, more than 80 percent of the trustees stated that the teachers were in the schools to teach the materials that were authorized by the Department of Education. Prior to this statement, the trustees were also asked if they, as trustees, had any influence over the decisions made by the Department of Education. Approximately 87 percent of the trustees stated that they had little influence over the decisions made by the Department of Education. As is shown in Table 27, trustees perceived the role of the teacher was to teach what was authorized by the Department of Education even though the trustees recognized their limited influence over the decisions made by the Department of Education.

SUMMARY

The trustees were asked to respond to 26 selected 'belief' statements. Trustees had strong reactions to nine of the statements. For example, the trustees agreed that parents do not realize the limitations that trustees have in influencing change and yet the trustees responded overshelmingly that they had influence in making decisions at the school board level. When asked if they had any influence over the decisions made by the Department of Education, a large majority felt that they had little influence in the

Table 27

Trustee Perceptions on the Professional Staffs such as Teachers, Central Office, and Department of Education Personnel

Number	Questionnaire Statements	% Yes	% No
9.	I feel that the school district central office demonstrates little respect for trustee opinions.[1]	07.3	91.5
11.	I feel that I have little influence over the decisions made by the Department of Education.	87.8	12.2
16.	I believe that teachers are in our schools to teach the materials or content that is authorized by the Department of Education.[2]	80.5	17.1

[1] Not answered by 1.2 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 2.4 percent of the trustees.

Department of Education decision-making process as compared to their feeling that their central office respected their opinions in the school board decision-making process.

Trustees stated that parents, as a group, shared their common concerns regarding the education of their children, but also stated that the individual parent reacted very differently to an educational problem when their own child is directly affected by the problem. When further asked if the schools could meet all the needs of all the students, the trustees overwhelmingly stated 'No'.

Trustees further reacted strongly to the teaching of morals and manners of society. They stated that morals and manners should be taught as early as possible, but at the same time, trustees stated that teachers were in the schools to teach the materials or content that is authorized by the Department of Education. According to the trustees, there must be some censorship of materials and films that are allowed in the schools.

When asked if they felt at a disadvantage in trying to understand the young people, a large majority of trustees felt that they understood the young people and that there were many social and academic problems that could be solved if the students acted more responsibly.

Trustees agreed that discipline should be stricter in the schools. They also agreed that optional programs, sex education programs, and religious education programs should be made available in schools. They seemed, however, less receptive to compulsory religious participation in the schools.

In the other selected statements such as enrichment programs, counselling services, involvement of the school in contemporary social programs, and the grade 12 graduation, a majority of the trustees wanted positive action on the part of the school.

CHAPTER IX

A COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS BETWEEN THE TRUSTEE AND THE TRUSTEE-COUNCILLOR

Trustees are either elected directly by the local ratepayer or become trustees after being elected as County Councillors. A small percentage are appointed directly by the Minister of Education. Does the method by which the trustee assumed office affect his/her abilities to assume the mandatory and discretionary powers that are outlined in the Alberta School Act 1970?

The purpose of this chapter is to report the perceptions of the elected trustee as compared to the trustee-councillor and, therefore, attempt to answer whether or not the method by which the trustee or trustee-councillor assumed office affected his/her perceptions on schooling.

COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS: SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT

In the questionnaire, there were ten statements or questions where the responses of the trustees, as compared to the trustee-councillors, were significantly different. A further T-test was used to compare the responses of the rural trustees (divisions) to the responses of the trustee-councillors and trustees of counties.

In Part 1 of the questionnaire, the responses from the questions, which dealt with how often mainstreaming and budgets of the central office were handled and how well the school handled student discipline problems, were significantly different.

In Part 2 of the questionnaire, three statements were identified as being answered differently by the trustees as compared to the trustee-councillors. The three statements dealt with local property tax, transportation of all students, and minimal transportation eligibility.

In Part 3 of the questionnaire, four statements were identified as being answered differently by the trustees as compared to the trustee-councillor. The four statements dealt with the central office, the influence of the trustees, religious participation in school, and enrichment programs.

PART 1

Mainstreaming

The trustees were asked how often the mainstreaming of the handicapped or disadvantaged students was discussed at their board meetings. The trustee-councillors discussed mainstreaming more often than the trustees. As is shown in Table 28, 36 percent of the trustee-councillors, as compared to 17 percent of the trustees, stated that mainstreaming was discussed often at school board meetings. About 15 percent of the trustees stated that mainstreaming was never discussed as compared to four percent of the trustee-councillors. According to the second T-test, which compared the trustees of divisions to the trustees and trustee-councillors of counties, there were no significant differences in the responses between the two groups. Mainstreaming seems to be a more frequent topic of discussion in rural Alberta than it is in urban Alberta.

Budgets

The budgets for the central office were discussed more often by the trustee-councillors as compared to the trustees. Budgets, as is shown in Table 28, were often discussed by 60 percent of the trustee-councillors, as compared to 34 percent of the trustees. According to the second T-test, which compared the trustees of the divisions to the trustees and trustee-councillors of the counties, there was a significant difference between the two groups. The responses of the division trustees were very similar to the responses of all the trustees when compared to the trustee-councillor responses. For example, 34 percent of all the trustees as compared to 32 percent when only the division trustees were tabulated, responded that budgets for the central office were discussed often.

Discipline

The questionnaire asked the trustees to judge how well the schools were handling specific situations. The trustee response to the question on student discipline was significant different from the trustee-councillors. As is shown in Table 28, 84.9 percent of the trustees, as compared to 64 percent of the trustee-councillor, stated that student discipline problems were handled very well to well. When tabulating the responses of the division trustees and comparing them to the county trustees and trustee-councillors, 92 percent of the division trustees, as compared to 63.7 percent of the trustees and trustee-councillors of counties, stated that the schools were handling student discipline very well to well. The trustee-councillors judged the schools to be handling student discipline more poorly than the trustees.

Table 28

A Comparison of Trustee and Trustee-Councillor Responses that are Significantly Different in Part 1 of the Questionnaire

Item	Trustees			Councillor-Trustees		
(How Often Discussed)	% Often.	% Occas.	% Never	% Often.	% Occas.	% Never
Mainstreaming of Students.	17.0	67.9	15.1	36.0	60.0	4.0
Budgets for the Central Office.	34.0	58.5	7.5	60.0	40.0	
(How Well Handled)	% V.Well.	% Well.	% Poorly	% V.Well.	% Well.	% Poorly
Student Discipline	22.6	62.3	11.3	12.0	52.0	3.6[1]

[1] Not answered by 3.8 of the trustees or councillors.

Part 2

Property Tax

In Part 2 of the questionnaire, the trustees and the trustee-councillors were asked if they believed that the local property tax payer should continue to pay a portion of the cost of education. About 92 percent of the trustees believed that the local property tax payer should continue to pay a portion of the cost of education as compared to 72 percent of the trustee-councillors. According to the results of the second T-test, which compared the trustees of divisions to the trustees and trustee-councillors of the counties, 92 percent of the division trustees believed that a portion of the cost of education should be born by the local property tax payer, as compared to 75.8 percent of the trustees and trustee-councillors of counties. As is shown in Table 29, a larger proportion of trustees believed that the local property tax payer should pay for a portion of the cost of education.

Transportation

The trustees and the trustee-councillors differed significantly in their responses on the question of bussing all students to school. About 11 percent of the trustees felt that boards should provide transportation to all students as compared to 40 percent of the trustee-councillors who felt that the board should provide transportation to all students. When the division trustees were separated from the other trustees, 16 percent of the division trustees, as compared to the 11 percent of all the trustees, believed that the board should provide transportation to all students. As shown in Table 29, there was a significant difference of opinion between the trustees and the trustee-councillors on the transportation of all students to school.

The trustees and the trustee-councillors were further asked if there should be a minimum distance for students to qualify for provincial transportation grants. About 56 percent of the trustees, as compared to 32 percent of the trustee-councillors believed that there should be a minimum distance for students to qualify for transportation grants. According to the second T-test, there were no significant differences in the answers of the trustees of divisions as compared to the answers of the trustees and trustee-councillors of the counties. As is shown in Table 29, more trustees believed that there should be a minimum distance stipulated to qualify for transportation grants. The second T-test, however, indicated that this question of mimimum distance to qualify for transportation grants seemed to be a rural versus an urban question and less a trustee versus a trustee-councillor question.

Table 29

A Comparison of Trustee and Trustee-Councillor Responses that are Significantly Different in Part 2 of the questionnaire

Item	Trustee		Trustee-Councillor	
	% Yes	% No	% Yes	% No
Local Property Tax (pay a portion of ed. bill).	92.5	7.5	72.0	28.0
Transportation of all students to school.	11.3	88.7	40.0	60.0
Minimal distance to qualify for grants.	56.6	43.4	32.0	68.0

Part 3

Central Office

The trustees and the trustee-councillors were asked if they felt that the school district central office demonstrated little respect for trustee opinion. According to their responses, the trustees and the trustee-councillors were very supportive of their central office. This support for the central office differed significantly between the trustees and the trustee-councillors. For example, zero percent of the trustees agreed that the central office demonstrated little respect for trustee opinions whereas 20 percent of the trustee-councillors agreed that the central office demonstrated little respect for trustee opinion. According to the results of the second T-test, in which the trustees of the divisions were compared to the trustees and the trustee-councillors of the counties, there were significant differences in the responses. All the trustees were very supportive of their central office whereas 81.8 percent of the trustee-councillors were supportive of their central office.

When further asked if the trustee had limited influence over the decisions made in the name of the local school board, 9.4 percent of the trustees felt that they had limited influence over the decisions made in the name of the local school board. A minority (32%) of trustee-councillors felt that they had limited influence over the decisions made in the name of the local school board. As is shown in Table 30, trustees were more supportive of their central office and felt more strongly that they had influence over the decisions made in the name of the local school board.

Religious Education

The statement -I believe that a minimal amount of religious participation (i.e.-morning prayer) should be compulsory- gained the support of a majority (72%) of the trustee-councillors whereas 49.1 percent of the trustees agreed with the statement. There was, however, no significant difference between the responses of the division trustees to those of the trustees and trustee-councillors of the counties. The responses of the division trustees were much closer to the responses of all the trustees. For example, 52 percent of the trustees from the divisions agreed that there should be a minimal amount of religious participation to the 49.1 percent of all the trustees who agreed with the statement. It should be noted that all the separate school trustees who answered the questionnaire were in the trustee category and none were in the trustee-division or trustee-county category. As is shown in Table 30, the opinion that a minimal amount of religious participation be compulsory in school seemed to be divided on a rural-urban basis instead of a trustee versus trustee-councillor basis.

Enrichment Programs

Trustees were asked if too little time and/or money was assigned to enrichment programs for the academically gifted children. About 49 percent of the trustees agreed that the school boards were not giving enough time and/or money for the gifted children as compared to 32 percent of the trustee-councillors. According to the second T-test, in which the trustees from divisions were compared to the trustees and trustee-councillors of the counties, there were no significant differences of opinion. The urban trustees, as shown in Table 30, seemed to indicate that too little money and/or time was spent on programs for the gifted as compared to the trustee-councillors.

OTHER RESPONSES THAT MAY HAVE SOME SIGNIFICANCE

According to the responses of the trustees, there were 11 other questions or statements where the trustee responses differed from the responses of the trustee-councillors. These 11 items or questions have a probability of being significantly different at the 0.1 to 0.05 level of the T test. The items or questions dealt with 1) school bus routing, 2) private schools, 3) class size, 4) compulsory attendance regulations, 5) admission of the handicapped or disadvantaged student, 6) suspension of students, 7) alternate programs, 8) student responsibility in solving academic problems, 9) sex education, 10) continuity between jr. and sr. high school, and 11) grade 12 graduation ceremonies.

Table 30

A Comparison of Trustee and Trustee-Councillor Responses that are Significantly Different in Part 3 of the Questionnaire

Item	Trustee		Trustee-Councillor	
	% Yes	% No	% Yes	% No
Little respect for trustee opinion by the central off.	00.0	100.0	20	80
Limited influence by the trustee over decisions.	9.4	90.6	32	68
Religious participation be compulsory.	49.1	41.2[1]	72	24[2]
Enrichment programs-too little money and/or time.	49.1	47.2[1]	32	64[2]

[1] Not answered by 3.8 percent of the trustees.

[2] Not answered by 4.0 percent of the trustee-councillors.

SUMMARY

Trustees and trustee-councillors differed significantly in their responses to 10 items in the questionnaire. There were 11 other questions or statements where the differences in the responses may be significant.

Trustee-councillors discussed mainstreaming of students more often than did trustees. Trustee-councillors also discussed the budgets of the central office more often than the trustees. When mainstreaming and budgets of the central office were compared between the trustees of divisions to the trustees and trustee-councillors of counties, there were no significant differences in the responses of the division trustees to those of the county trustees and trustee-councillors on mainstreaming, but there were significant differences in the responses of the trustees, as compared to the trustee-councillors, on the budgets of the central office.

The trustee-councillors judged the schools to be handling student discipline more poorly than the trustees.

The trustees believed that the local property payer should assume a portion of the cost of education. There was a significant difference in the responses of all the trustees to those of the trustee-councillors.

Trustees were also more opposed to the transportation of all students to school, as compared to the trustee-councillors. The trustees also opposed the removal of the minimal distance for students to qualify for grants. According to the T-test, there were no significant differences in the responses of the trustee-councillors to those of the division trustees. Transportation seemed to be a rural versus an urban question and less a trustee versus a trustee-councillor question.

Trustees, whether from the divisions or the districts, were more supportive of their central office than were the trustee-councillors. More trustees felt that they had more influence over the decisions made on their behalf than the trustee-councillors.

When asked if religious participation should be compulsory in schools, more rural division trustees and county trustees and trustee-councillors favoured compulsory religious participation in schools than did the trustees of districts.

Trustees were also asked if too little time and/or money was assigned to enrichment programs. According to the results of the T-tests, the urban trustees seemed to indicate that too little money/or time was spent on programs for the gifted as compared to the trustees and trustee-councillors of the divisions and counties.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the research problem, the related literature, and the findings of the study. This chapter also includes conclusions and implications of the findings with suggestions for further research.

SUMMARY

The trustee, elected by the local electorate or appointed by the Department of Education, is mandated to manage the affairs of its schools. Whether elected or appointed, the trustee also acts as, "administrative agent(s) for effective provincial control of education (Byrne, 1957)". The decisions the trustee makes plays a vital role in directing educational policy in Alberta. This study attempted to find answers to two basic questions on the status of the trustee. These two questions were:

1. What do trustees perceive to be the role of schooling?
2. Do trustees, by virtue of the method by which they are selected, have different perceptions and commitments to education, or do they perceive the role of schooling in the same manner?

A review of some related literature did not provide evidence that the method by which trustees assumed office affected his/her perception on the role of schooling.

The paucity of literature on the trustee has been noted by many authors in the literature review. Coleman (1973), for example, suggested this paucity of literature was especially true in contrast to the research and the writings available on the superintendent and principal. Many studies dealt incidently with the trustee, but it was comparatively rare to find research in which the primary thrust related to the trustees' perception of the role of schooling.

According to some authorities, the locally elected school authorities will continue as the viable alternative to centralized provincial control. Some authorities, however, have continued to question the viability of the present school boards. For these authorities, there was a need to revitalize or terminate the present structure of school boards.

Much of the literature referred to the Count (1927) research which indicated that trustee recruitment came from a narrow socio-economic grouping and that the effectiveness in representing the wishes of the local electorate was questionable. The narrow socio-economic grouping, according to other literature, did not weaken the effectiveness of the trustees. On the contrary, it was suggested that there was enough diversity among the trustees and that they were not passive captives of any group.

Much of the literature acknowledged that the chairman played a primary role in the effective running of school boards.

The data for the study were collected from a partial random selection of chairmen of boards and reeves of counties. Suggestions from former trustees, trustees, A.S.T.A. officials, school principals, parents, graduate students and staff members in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta were sought to improve the sensitivity of the instrument.

About 65 percent of the chairmen and reeves, who were selected, responded to the questionnaire. However, the chairmen and reeves, who were selected, have responsibilities for 95.74 percent of the total Alberta student population. The chairmen who responded to the questionnaire in turn represented about 84 percent of the total student population.

The data were analysed using the SPSS and DERS computer programs at the University of Alberta. Exploratory and confirmatory statistics were used to report the findings of the questionnaire. The responses of the trustees to the statements or items were reported in percentages. The T-test was used to compare the responses of the trustees to the trustee-councillors and the division trustees to the county trustees and trustee-councillors. The study assumed the trustees were representative of the population distribution and, therefore, had homogeneity of variance.

The data were analysed and reported using five broad educational issues. For example, the profile of the chairmen of the boards, the trustees' reporting on how often certain items were discussed at school board meetings, trustee opinions on how the schools were handling certain educational items, the respondents' evaluation of specific areas of the School Act, trustee perceptions on specific educational items, and a comparison of the responses of the trustees to the trustee-councillors were analysed and reported.

THE CHAIRMEN

The data indicated that the chairmen of the boards have had extensive experience as trustees. It also indicated that most of the chairmen have had a shorter tenure as chairmen. The data on the reeves, however, indicated the opposite. Most reeves have had long tenure as reeve and trustee.

DISCUSSION OF SELECTED ITEMS AT BOARD MEETINGS:

The attitude of trustees towards education may be reflected by how often they discussed selected educational issues. For example, trustees reported that they were very pre-occupied with any item which had financial implications.

Trustees indicated that such topics as the role of superintendent, trustee, and principal ranked high on their list of priorities. They also ranked the environment of the school, whether learning, or morale, or working conditions for teachers, of equal importance to the roles of the superintendent and the trustee. The roles of the principal and the teacher were ranked, however, lower on the list of discussion.

Other items, as is shown in Figure 1, such as changes in curriculum, mainstreaming of the handicapped or disadvantaged student, teacher termination, and student progress reporting surfaced as being less discussed at the school board meetings.

TRUSTEE OPINION ON SCHOOLS

The trustees were asked to judge how well the schools were handling specific items. On the basis of the responses being tabulated and compared on a continuum, trustees seemed to indicate their satisfaction with the testing program, the way schools were handling class size, teacher working conditions, the reporting system to the parents, the attendance and suspension procedures being followed in the schools and the school based budgets. Learning environment, student activities, discipline, and teacher-student rapport were not as effectively handled by the schools. The counselling services was also deemed to be less effectively handled than the majority of the selected items.

Trustees judged that the leadership role of the principal was handled more effectively than the classroom instructional supervisory role of the principal.

The trustee opinion indicated a general satisfaction with the manner in which the schools were being operated. When comparing the trustee responses on a continum, as is shown in Figure 2, certain items were judged more effectively handled than others. For example, the testing of students for any form of learning disabilities was judged most effective while the counselling services was judged one of the least effective.

```
Statements           0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-

Budgets (General)    ********************************
Declining Enrollment *************************
Dept. of Education
over Finance         *************************
Staffing             **********************
Role of Superintend. ********************
Class size           ******************
Hiring of personnel  *****************
Role of Trustee      *****************
Learning Environment
of the Student       *****************
Budgets (central off)*****************
P.R. with Community  ****************
Role of Principal    ***************
Working Conditions   ****************
Bus Routing          **************
Morale (Stud.-Staff) ***************
Principal:
Instructional leader **************
Supervisor of inst.  **************
Role of Teacher      ********
Curriculum           *********
Budgets-school       **********
Promotion of staff   ********
Mainstreaming (stud.)**********
Teacher as model     **********
Termination          *****
Curriculum-choices   *****
Progress reports     ******
External Exams       *****

                     0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-
```

Figure 1

Discussion of Selected Items at School Board Meetings
A Reporting of the Often Responses in Percentages

```
Statements           0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-

Testing for learn.
disabilities         ******************
Attendance of Stud.  ***************
School Based Budgets ************
Working Conditions   *************
Suspension of Stud.  **************
Progress Reports     ***********
Class Size           ************
Principal:
Leadership Role      **********
P.R. with Community  **********
Learning Environment
Student              *******
School               *******
Bus Discipline       ********
Student Activities   ********
Student-Teacher
Rapport              *****
Discipline Problems  ********
Counselling Services
from Central Office  ******
in the School        ****
Time on Task (Org.
of instruction)      *****
Classroom Instruc-
tional Supervision   *****
Teacher as Model     ****

                     0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-
```

Figure 2

Trustee Judgement on the Schools' Handling of Selected
Topics: A Reporting of the Very Well Responses
of the Trustees in Percentages

RESPONDENTS EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL ACT

The trustees were asked to evaluate four broad areas of the School Act that dealt with pupils, finance, personnel, and transportation. Seven items, as shown in Figure 3, seemed to have strong trustee reactions. The seven items dealt with compulsory attendance, local property tax, mainstreaming, alternate programs, declining or shifting enrollments, suspension, and bussing.

Trustees strongly favoured the continuation of student compulsory attendance regulations. The majority favoured having the regulations in the act as compared to giving the board the right to set the regulations.

Even though trustees seemed dissatified with the foundation program, they still favoured having the local property tax pay a portion of the costs of education.

The mainstreaming of the handicapped or disadvantaged child concerned the trustees. Trustees wanted the boards to have the right to control the admission of students because of the lack of facilities and/or programs.

Trustees clearly favoured the development of alternate programs under their direction. A much smaller majority of trustees favoured the establishment of alternate schools under their direction.

Trustees saw declining or shifting enrollment as a major problem.

There was an overwhelming support for the schools having the continued right to suspend students for a specified time limit and a fairly strong objection to the ministerial right to review the board decisions on expelled students.

Trustees stated that the present transportation grants structure did not meet the operational expenses. They further stated that they strongly opposed the bussing of all students to school.

TRUSTEE PERCEPTIONS ON SELECTED ISSUES

The trustees were asked to respond to 26 selected 'belief' statements. Trustees, as is shown in Figure 4, indicated some strong reaction to nine of the statements. For example, the trustees indicated that they felt that parents did not understand or realize the limitations that trustees have in influencing change. The trustees stated, however, by an overwhelming majority that they had influence in the decision-making process at their school board level. When asked if they had influence over the decisions made by the Department of Education, a large majority said 'No'.

The trustees felt that the teaching of morals and manners should be taught as early as possible, but at the same time, the trustees stated that they felt that the teachers were in the schools to teach the materials or content that was authorized by the Department of Education. They further stated that there must be some censorship of materials and films that are allowed in the schools.

When asked if they felt at a disadvantage in trying to understand the young people, a large majority of trustees felt that they understood the young people and that they

```
Statements            0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-

Compulsory Attendance
Regulations           ********************************
Abolish Compulsory
Attendance            *************
Relax the Attendance
rules                 *********************
Compulsory Attendance
Holds Students in
School                *******************************
Board have the Right
to Admit Students     ****************************
Board have the Right
to Refuse Admission   ****************************
Right of Suspension
by Teachers           ****************************
Right of Suspension
by the Board          *************************************
Minister of Education
be final authority
over expulsion        ************
Foundation Program
Pay all Costs         *********
Financial Control by
the Province over
Education             ********************
Local Property Tax
pay a Portion (ed.)   *********************************
Financial Flexibility in
Alternative Program   ************
Offer Alternate
School Programs       **********************************
Should Private Schools
Obtain the same Grants************

                      0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-
```

Figure 3

Percentage of Yes Responses to Selected Items
on the School Act 1970 when stated in the Affirmative

```
                      0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-

Offer Alternate Programs
within Board School   *********************************
Establish Alternate
Schools within System********************
Declining or Shifting
Enrollment a Problem *************************************
Combining Classes
(Elem.-Jr.High) to
keep ratio appropriate******************************
Combining Classes
(Senior High)         **********
Written Reason for
Teacher Transfer      ************************
Too difficult to
Terminate Contract
or Designation        *********************************
Teacher Evaluation
Criteria in Act       ************************
Transportation for
all students          *******
Minimum distance for
Bussing               ******************
Bus to Alternative
School (responsible)  *************
Bus capacity a good
Criterion for Grants  ************
Full cost of Bussing
by Province           *********************
Present Bussing Grants
Adequate              *****
Closing Smaller Schools
and bus               *************

                      0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-
```

Figure 3 (Continued)

Percentage of Yes Responses to Selected Items on the
School Act 1970 when stated in the Affirmative

believed there were many social and academic problems that could by solved if the students acted more responsibly. The trustees further stated that they believed that the schools were not able to meet all the needs of all the students.

The trustees were very supportive of their central office and felt that their opinions were heard. They did not, however, feel that they had any influence over the decisions of the Department of Education.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of the trustee perceptions on the role of schooling was restricted to surveying the chairman of the public and separate school boards and the reeves of the counties.

The conclusions reached represent a descriptive analysis of the trustee responses to the questionnaire in which the trustees were asked to give their perceptions on selected educational items.

1) According to the profile of the chairman and reeves, Alberta has very experienced leadership at the school board level. The majority of the trustees in the study have been trustees for a least two full terms.
2) Budgets seemed to be a very critical item to the trustees. An overwhelming number of trustees stated that the discussion of budgets was of paramount importance. The trustees, as is shown in Figure 1, often discussed items that had financial implications such as declining or shifting enrollments, the

```
Statements           0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-

Parents Supportive
of Board             *****************************

Parents Share Common
Concerns             *************************************

Parents React dif.
if Own Child Affected*************************************

Parents do not Realize
Trustee Limitation   ************************************

Students Acted More
Responsibly          *****************************

At a Disadvantage in
Understanding Student********

Sex Education would
encourage experiment.*********

Meet the needs of
All the students     **

Too Little Money/Time
Enrichment Programs  ***********************

Stress of Graduation ********************

Counselling Services
Assisting all Students*************

Stricter Discipline  **************************

Censorship           *****

Teach Morals as
Early as Possible    *************************************

Actively Involved in
Solving Contemp. Problems***********

Sex Education-Taught *************************

Rel. Ed. Available   **************************

Min. Rel. Participation********************

Too much time in
Teaching Options     *************

Jr-Sr Continuity is
Lacking              ******************

I have Limited
Influence -Decisions ******

Rely on Others for
Guidance             ***************

Parents do Not Under-
stand role of Trustee*************************

                     0%- -15%- -30%- -45%- -60%- -75%- -90%-
```

Figure 4

Trustee Perceptions on Selected Statements Expressed
in Percentages when stated in the Affirmative

Department of Education's control over financing, and staffing. Such items as external exams, progress reports to the parents and curriculum choices were discussed the least often.

3) The trustees judged the schools to be handling the testing of any form of learning disabilities most effectively as compared to the handling of the counselling services, which were judged to be one of the least effectively handled items. As was shown in Figure 2, the trustees also judged the schools to be handling attendance and suspension of students very well as compared to the handling of teacher and/or principal roles.

4) Trustees believed that schools were not able to meet all the needs of all the students. As was shown in Figure 3, trustees felt that the attendance, the suspension, and the admission of students had to be controlled by the board. Trustees wanted attendance rules continued. They also wanted to have the right to suspend students from attendance. Few trustees felt that the Minister of Education should have the final authority over the expulsion of students by the boards. Trustees further felt that they had to have the right to refuse the admission of students because of lack of programs or facilities. Mainstreaming was, therefore, of concern to the trustees.

5) The local property tax was still favoured as one of the

methods to pay for educational costs. There were some significant differences of opinion between the trustees and the trustee-councillors of the counties. Fewer trustee-councillors favoured having the local property tax pay for a portion of the education costs.

6) Trustees were also concerned with alternatives in schooling. They favoured alternate programs, as was shown in Figure 3, much more than they favoured alternate schools within their jurisdiction.

7) Trustees felt that the teachers were in the schools to teach the materials or content that was authorized by the Department of Education. Trustees also felt that there must be some censorship of materials and films that were allowed in the schools.

8) Trustees seemed to be frustrated with the limitations of their role in influencing changes or reaching decisions. As is shown in Figure 1 and 4, trustees felt that they had little influence over the decisions made by the Department of Education. Trustees felt that parents were supportive of the boards but the trustees were also more frustrated because they felt that the parents did not understand the limitations of their role.

9) There were some significant differences of opinion between the trustees and the trustee-councillors on the property tax. There were also differences of opinion on such items as a) budgets, b) mainstreaming, c) student discipline, d) religious participation, and e) enrich-

ment programs. There were, however, similar perceptions on the role of schooling on such items as a) attendance and admission, b) teacher contracts and teacher termination, c) teacher performance guidelines, d) school-student-staff morale, e) needs of the students, and f) the role of the principal as supervisor of instruction.

IMPLICATIONS

Trustees have diverse opinions on the role of schooling. According to the responses of the trustees, they seemed to believe that they have the responsibility of providing the students with the necessary learning environment. The implications for this generalization are as follows:

1) The experience of the trustees should be recognized as a great asset in the policy-making deliberations of the province. The trustees' responses indicated a lack of trust seemed to exist between the provincial policymakers and those of the school boards.
2) Trustees were saying that hard times were upon them and that budgets were causing concern. It would seem that the foundation program was not accomplishing its objectives as it was originally intended. The over-emphasis on budgets by the trustees may erode their fragile control over educational policies. Trustees may concentrate on the immediate financial problems and

overlook long term implications to their educa-tional policies.

3) The counselling services seemed to be performing an excellent function in testing for learning disabilities. It would seem that the school board staffs have concentrated much of their efforts to detecting learning disabilities but have not used their counselling services as efficiently. Trustees stated that the counselling services had to improve.

4) The trustees stated that schools were only one of the agencies charged with the task of teaching the students the academic, vocational, and moral values of our society. Trustees, therefore, implied that the schools could not meet all the needs of all the students and that other agencies had obligations to serving the needs of our students. The trustees further implied that the teachers' role were one of teaching the materials or content that was authorized by the Department of Education. The discussion and solving of contemporary problems was not solely a school role.

5) According to the trustees, the local property tax payer should continue to pay a share of the education costs. This belief that the local property tax payer should pay for a portion of the education costs goes against the recommendations of the municipal local governments. A probable conflict between the two local government

agencies would seem to be inevitable.

6) Trustees may have to review their position on alternate schools as compared with alternative programs within schools. Under the Constitution Act 1982, parent requests for alternate forms of schooling may have to be favoured more than alternative programs within schools in order to comply with the Charter of Rights.

7) Trustees implied that they had little influence with the Department of Education and that their parents, in turn, did not understand the limitations they had to affect change. The trustees' role as the local representative of the parents may need to be given more credibility.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study attempted to report the perceptions of trustees on a very wide range of items. This study was also restricted to the views of the chairmen of boards of education and the reeves of counties. Further research should include:

1) investigate the perceptions of all trustees in the province with random sampling techniques.

2) investigate trustee perceptions on a rural basis and/or on an urban basis only. For example, districts of the province could be researched as opposed to divisions or counties and visa versa.

3) investigate in greater depth trustee frustration over the limitations of their roles which were indicated on critical issues such as attendance, admission, mainstreaming, counselling, etc. issues.

4) investigate trustee perceptions on the School Act.

Beaudry (1978), in his masters thesis, suggested other research areas on the trustee. His suggestions are not duplicated as suggestions for research.

The trustee plays that vital role of intermediary between the parents and students and the professional staffs. Further studies on the trustee can only assist our understanding of this vital role.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Trustee Perceptions on the
Role of Schooling

Department of Educational
Administration
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

Background

Please circle the appropriate areas of background and experience.

A) ELECTED

Trustee-Division-other	1
Trustee-District-	2
Trustee-County-(elected in town,etc.)	3
Councillor-trustee in a County	4
APPOINTED trustee	5

Years of Experience

B) As a TRUSTEE

1 - 3 years	1
4 - 6 years	2
7 or more years	3

C) As CHAIRMAN of School Board

not chairman	1
1 - 3 years	2
4 - 6 years	3
7 or more years	4

D) As REEVE of a County

N.A.	1
1 - 3 years	2
4 - 6 years	3
7 or more years	4

PART 1

The purpose of this section is to elicit your response to the following specific activities the Board may discuss at board meetings.

Please circle the answer that best indicates, how often the board has to handle this topic. (OFTEN, OCCASionally, or NEVER)

How often does the Board discuss the following?

	Often.	Occas.	Never
1. Role of the teacher in the classroom.	1	2	3
2. Role of the principal.	1	2	3
3. Role of the superintendent and the central office.	1	2	3

	Often.	Occas.	Never
4. School bus routing.	1	2	3
5. Hiring of personnel.(teachers, support,etc.)	1	2	3
6. Mainstreaming of handicapped or disadvantaged students.	1	2	3
7. Alternate schools within your jurisdiction.	1	2	3
8. Private schools.	1	2	3
9. Class size.	1	2	3
10. External examination of students by the Department of Education.	1	2	3
11. Student activities such as dances.	1	2	3
12. Learning environment for students.	1	2	3
13. School-community public relations environment.	1	2	3
14. The principal as supervisor of instruction.	1	2	3
15. School-student-staff morale.	1	2	3
16. Working conditions for teachers.	1	2	3
17. Learning environment for students.	1	2	3
18. The choice of curriculum material.	1	2	3
19. The changes in curriculum as mandated by the Department of Education.	1	2	3
20. The Department of Education control over school finance.	1	2	3
21. Termination of teacher (certified personnel) contract.	1	2	3
22. Student progress reporting to the parents.	1	2	3
23. The teacher as a model for the students.	1	2	3
24. Declining or shifting enrollments.	1	2	3
25. Discipline of teachers for breach of Board policy or regulations.	1	2	3
26. Staffing of schools (in general)	1	2	3

	Often.	Occas.	Never
27. Promotion of teachers (to supervisor, principal, depart. head, etc.).	1	2	3
28. Budgets (in general).	1	2	3
29. Budgets for the central office.	1	2	3
30. Budgets for each individual school.	1	2	3
31. The guidance programs in terms of testing and counselling of students for placement.	1	2	3
32. The role of the trustee as it relates to policy decision-maker.	1	2	3
33. The role of the principal as it relates to instructional leader.	1	2	3

In your opinion, how well are the schools handling the following?

Please circle the category that best approximates your judgement. A fourth (4th) category exists for those items that, you judge, are Not Applicable to your school system. The categories are Very Well, Well, Poorly, and N.A.

	Very Well.	Well.	Poorly.	N.A.
34. School-community public relations.	1	2	3	4
35. Attendance of students (in general).	1	2	3	4
36. Suspension of students.	1	2	3	4
37. The school learning environment.	1	2	3	4
38. Activities for students (clubs, dances,etc.)	1	2	3	4
39. The teacher's role as a model for the students.	1	2	3	4
40. Handling bus discipline.	1	2	3	4
41. Class size	1	2	3	4

	Very Well.	Well.	Poorly.	N.A.
42. School based budgets.	1	2	3	4
43. Student discipline problems (smoking, drugs, etc.).	1	2	3	4
44. The reporting of student progress to parents.	1	2	3	4
45. The efficient use of counselling services that are provided by the Board's central office.	1	2	3	4
46. The efficient use of counselling services in the schools.	1	2	3	4
47. The testing of students for any form of learning disabilities.	1	2	3	4
48. Student learning environment.	1	2	3	4
49. Teacher working conditions.	1	2	3	4
50. Student-teacher rapport.	1	2	3	4
51. The leadership role of the principal(s).	1	2	3	4
52. Classroom instructional supervision.	1	2	3	4
553.The efficient organization and use of student instruction.	1	2	3	4

PART 2

The purpose of the following questions or statements is to elicit your evaluation of the present 'School School Act, 1970' as amended from time to time.

Each statement is followed by a series of questions. Again, your personal opinions are very important, not those of the Board as a whole.

Please circle (1) for agreement(yes) or circle (2) for disagreement(No).

A

The 'School Act, 1970', as amended from time to time, allows school boards to set regulations for pupil admittance to schools and suspension of pupils from their schools.

	Yes	No
1. Do you agree with the 'School Act, 1970' compulsory attendance age regulations?	1	2
2. Should your Board have the right to abolish compulsory attendance prior to age 16?	1	2
3. Should your Board have the right to relax the attendance rules?	1	2
4. Should your Board have the right to make final decisions as to which students can or can not be admitted into school?	1	2
5. Should your Board have the right to refuse the admission of handicapped or disadvantaged students because of the lack of essential specialized programs?	1	2
6. Should the Board have the right to refuse the admission of handicapped or disadvantaged students because of lack of facilities?	1	2
7. Should the teachers have the right to suspend students from their classes for a specified time limit?	1	2
8. Should the schools have the right to suspend students from the school for a specified time limit?	1	2
9. Do you feel that the compulsory attendance regulations to age sixteen inclusive (16) keeps a significant number of students in school?	1	2
10 Should the minister of education be the final authority over students expelled by the Board?	1	2

B

The School Act sets out the broad guidelines for the financing of education.

	Yes	No
1. Should the Foundation Program pay for all education costs?	1	2
2. Since the province pays, on the average, sixty (60) per cent of the operational costs of the boards. Should the province continue to have the control they currently hold over school boards?	1	2
3. Do you believe that the local property tax payer should continue to pay for a portion of the cost of education?	1	2
4. Does the present financing of education allow your Board flexibility to offer alternatives to the children of parents who make such requests?	1	2
5. Do you believe that local school boards should be allowed to offer alternate school programs to the students?	1	2
6. Should the alternate private schools obtain the same per pupil grants as local school boards?	1	2
7. Are you in favour of establishing alternate programs within schools under the direction of your Board?	1	2
8. Are you in favour of establishing alternate schools under the direction of your Board?	1	2

C

The School Act sets out regulations for Boards to follow in the hiring, transfering, change of designation, and the termination of a teacher's contract.

	Yes	No
1. Do you believe that declining or shifting enrollments are a problem for school boards?	1	2
2. Are you in agreement with combining two (2) or more classes in grades 1 to 9 in a classroom in order to keep a reasonable teacher-pupil ratio?	1	2

	Yes	No
3. Would you combine two (2) or more classes in grades 10-12, regardless of the teacher-pupil ratio?	1	2
4. Should the Superintendent be required to give written reasons when teachers are transferred to another school?	1	2
5. Do you feel that it is presently too difficult to terminate a teacher's contract or designation?	1	2
6. Should teacher performance guidelines (evaluative criteria) be more specifically described in the School Act?	1	2

D

The School Act outlines the broad guidelines to be followed in the transportation of students to and from school.

	Yes	No
1. Should Boards provide transportation to all students?	1	2
2. There is a present minimum distance for students to qualify for transportation grants. Should there be a minimum distance stipulated in the School Act?	1	2
3. If parents want their student(s) to go to an "alternative" type of school, under the direction of the Board, should the Board be responsible for their transportation?	1	2
4. Is bus capacity (number of passengers) a good criterion for grant purposes?	1	2
5. Do you favour the closing of smaller schools and the transportion of the students to a centrally located larger school?	1	2
6. Should local boards expect the province to pay the full cost of transporting students to the schools?	1	2
7. Are the present transportation grants adequate to meet the operational costs?	1	2

PART 3

The purpose of this section is to elicit your personal response to the following statements.

Please circle (1) if you agree with the statement or circle (2) if you disagree with the statement.

agree/disagree

1. I find that parents are very supportive of the decisions made on their behalf by the School Board. 1 2

2. I find that most parents share common concerns regarding the education of their children. 1 2

3. I find that parents respond differently to educational problems if their own child is directly affected by the problem. 1 2

4. I feel that students could solve many of their social and academic problems if they acted more responsibly. 1 2

5. I feel that there is a need for stricter discipline in schools. 1 2

6. I feel that there should not be any censorship of books or films used in schools. 1 2

7. I believe that it is important to teach the child as early as possible the manners and morals of society. 1 2

8. I feel at a disadvantage, in terms of understanding young people, because of the increasing complexity of our social environment. 1 2

9. I feel that the school district central office demonstrates little respect for trustee opinions. 1 2

10. I feel that I have limited influence over the decisions made in the name of the local school board. 1 2

11. I feel that I have little influence over the decisions made by the Department of Education. 1 2

12. I am expected to rely on other sources to guide me in decision-making. 1 2

	Agree/Disagree	
13. I find that parents do not understand the role of a trustee.	1	2
14. I believe that parents do not realize the limitation(s) we have in influencing change(s).	1	2
15. I believe that schools should not be actively involved in solving contemporary social problems.	1	2
16. I believe that teachers are in our schools to teach the materials or content that is authorized by the Department of Education.	1	2
17. I believe that sex education should be taught in school.	1	2
18. I believe that exposure to sex education is likely to encourage students to experiment.	1	2
19. I believe that it is right and proper that religious education in schools should be available.	1	2
20. I believe that a minimal amount of religious participation (i.e.-morning prayer) should be compulsory.	1	2
21. I believe that our schools are not able to meet all the needs of all the students.	1	2
22. I believe that schools are spending too much time in teaching options.	1	2
23. I believe that too little time and/or money is assigned to enrichment programs for the academically gifted children.	1	2
24. I believe that continuity, especially between Jr. and Sr. High School is lacking.	1	2
25. I believe that emphasis on grade 12 graduation for all students, regardless of academic ability, places too much stress on certain students.	1	2
26. I believe that the counselling services are assisting all students.	1	2

Thank-you very much for your kind assistance

APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDENCES

Box 14, Site 13, R.R.5
Edmonton, Alberta
May 8, 1982

Madam or Sir:

May I urge you to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me - in the stamped and addressed envelope included - as soon as possible.

Your responses to the questions along with those of approximately 140 other Chairmen of School Boards and/or Reeves, will provide insights essential to the formation of my thesis which relates to the 'Role of Schooling as perceived by the Trustee'.

I believe that a compilation of your personal views will provide a valuable resource and adjunct to other research and task-force work already on record at the University and/or at the A.S.T.A. office.

I have the unreserved support of the President of the A.S.T.A., Mr. P. Gibeau and the Executive Director, Dr. L. Ferguson in regards to this project and would be deeply appreciative of your personal contribution.

All responses will be held in strictest confidence. It will be impossible to identify them in any way with any specific trustee.

A summary of my findings will be sent to each participant as I feel the information tabulated from the responses will be of value to you. In order to send you a summary, I've included a mailing control number for that purpose only.

Noel P. Gour

Graduate student
Depart. of Educational Adm.
University of Alberta

Box 14, Site 13, R.R. 5
Edmonton, Alberta
May 31,1982

JUST a REMINDER

Sir:

May I please urge you to complete the questionnaire sent to you by Noel P. Gour.

If you have already forwarded the questionnaire -thank-you. I will forward a summary of the findings during the summer recess.

If you have not been able to complete the questionnaire, I would be deeply appreciative of your assistance, as the Reeve, sitting on the Board of Education.

In order for the study to truely represent the views of the Chairmen and/or Reeves, it is preferable to have a very high return. I appreciate that this is a very busy time of the year, but I do hope you can assist me in the project.

Noel P. Gour

Graduate Student
Depart. of Educational Adm.
University of Alberta